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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PERCEIVED PROBLEMS AND BENEFITS OF A DECENTRALIZED ELEMENTARY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN GHANA

BY

JOSEPH O. MANKOE ©

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
SPRING 1992

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Mankoe

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

Ghana Education Service (GES)
District Office
P. O. Box 240
Agona Swedru, C/R
Ghana, West Africa

DATE: February 6, 1992

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled:

PERCEIVED PROBLEMS AND BENEFITS OF A DECENTRALIZED ELEMENTARY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN GHANA

Submitted by Joseph O. Mankoe in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

W. G. Maynes
Dr. William G. Maynes Supervisor

Dr. Frank Peters

David Baine
Professor David. A. Baine

Date: February 6, 1992

ENYIMYAMHYE

Medze nwoma yi hye (1) nyimpa ebien a woogyee me taataa, na (2) nyimpa enum a worema me ahom enyimnyam:

(1) Me na Nana Aba Tsetsewa na m'egya Supi Kow Osapa a wotsetsee me abodoma ano asorye na wotoow fapem dzendzen dze hyee biribiara ase;

(2) Me yer Marian Obo Mankoe, na me mbabaa baasa: Nana Aba, Effe, na M'ma Asher, na me babanyin Ato de wodze ahohyedo rotow fapem no do ma biribiara edzi mu.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to (1) two persons who brought me up, and (2) five persons who are sustaining me:

(1) My mum Nana Aba Tsetsewa and my dad Supi Kow Osapa, who taught my infant lips to pray and laid a solid foundation to start it all;

(2) My wife Marian Obo Mankoe, my three daughters: Nana Aba, Effe, and M'ma Asher, and my son Ato, for sustained building on the foundation to make it all possible.

ABSTRACT

The study examined the operations of Ghana's newly decentralized educational system at the elementary level. The purpose was to determine the extent to which the set objectives of the decentralized system had been or were being achieved. To address this issue meant examining stakeholders' perceptions of the extent of: (1) their actual and preferred involvement in school decision making, (2) potential problems facing the new system, and (3) potential benefits derived from the new system.

The study was carried out in one school district, Agona Swedru District in the Central Region of Ghana. Data collection was done from May to July, 1991. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire from five stakeholder groups, including 26 district office administrators, 45 headmasters, 84 teachers, 54 parents, and 26 community leaders. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected respondents from each group.

Analyses of the questionnaire data identified discrepancies between stakeholders' actual and preferred levels of involvement in school decision making. Stakeholders generally perceived that they had relatively little involvement and indicated a preference for considerably more involvement. Items related to educational resources, such as allocation of funds, provision and renovation of school buildings, textbooks, and audio-visual aids, had greater discrepancies between actual and preferred involvement than did items related to the actual processes or pedagogy of education, such as classroom instruction, in-service training, design of courses, and student promotion.

With respect to potential problems in the system, all items were perceived as problems, but to varying degrees. "Inadequate incentives to play leading role," and "insufficient allocation of resources" were perceived as the two biggest problems.

The role of the community closely followed as the next major problem. Respondents mentioned lack of workshops as another pressing problem.

As regards potential benefits, all items were perceived as benefits, but to varying degrees. Respondents indicated that development of skills and attitudes in specialized areas, and improved quality of programs to match students' choices were the two biggest benefits. Acquisition of practical skills that would enable students to obtain jobs, a reduction in the period spent on pre-university education, and subject teaching in the schools were noted as other benefits.

Among the stakeholder groups, teachers perceived the problem items as being more problematic that did other groups. They also perceived the benefit items as being less beneficial than did other groups. The thesis concludes with implications for practice and suggestions for further research.

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Space alone will not permit me to recount names of headmasters, teachers, parents, and community leaders who willingly accepted to participate in the study. To any of these stakeholders I say, whenever you lay hands on a copy of this report, please say to yourself, "Yes, I contributed to this product."

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Centralization or decentralization of control over educational decision-making has become a subject of debate among political authorities as well as professionals in educational administration. Johnson (1991, p. 2) believed that recognition of a constantly declining educational quality and lack of success in achieving integration has led to the emergence of the decentralization-community control concept as a new thrust for achieving substantive changes in education. A Senior Executive of the Ministry of Education in New South Wales, Australia, cited in Sarros and Carruthers (1991, p. 12) expressed optimism in future educational administration thus:

> I hope to see increasing commitment to community at all levels of our society. Educational administration is so involved with the community and its concerns I hope this commitment is developed. This will mean devolution of power in public education and increasing communication with and among non-government schools.

It is from this background that the study focused on investigating perceived problems and benefits pertaining to the implementation of a decentralized educational system at the elementary level in Ghana. The benefits of decentralizing control of education to the local communities have been enumerated in several studies. Glickman (1990 p. 69), for example stated, "I am a firm believer in the benefits to education of the move from legislative, externally developed regulations to site-based shared-governance initiatives." Referring to empowerment in the process of decentralization he observed:

> The theory of professional empowerment is that, when given collective responsibility to make educational decisions in an information-rich environment, educators will work harder and smarter on behalf of their clients: students and their parents (p. 69).

Caldwell and Spinks (1988, p. vii) argued that the time is now right for many countries to decentralize:

> We believe that the values of effectiveness, efficiency, equity, liberty, choice and, indeed, excellence, are not mutually exclusive, and that the time is now at hand in many countries to bring about a shift in the centralization-decentralization continuum as far as management of education is concerned (p. vii).

These comments illustrate potential benefits of decentralization. With the hopes of accruing these benefits and in so doing address a variety of persistent educational issues, Ghana has embarked on a program of decentralizing educational decision making. One particularly persistent issue relates to the very large proportion of the government budget that is devoted to education. The Education Review Committee Report (1967, p. 112) estimated that about one-fifth of the country's annual budget was devoted to education. A decade later George (1976) reported that education was taking 22 percent of the recurrent budget and 19 percent of the total (recurrent and development) budget. Another issue is that for many decades, education has not reflected the true needs of the citizens as individuals, and indeed the country as a whole. Eghan and Odum (1989, p. 8) referring to the work of the Mills-Odoi Commission of 1967 and the Oko Commission of 1974 on decentralization wrote:

> The import of their work and its benefit to Ghana is the simple fact that they truthfully stated that no real effective and efficient development would take place in Ghana without restructuring and decentralizing Ghana's machinery of government and make it more accessible for the average Ghanaian.

With such decentralization, local resources could be tapped to assist in the effective and efficient delivery of education. This implies that the local community should exercise greater control which has meant a reorganization of administrative functions in education.

The study focuses on identifying the problems of the implementation of the recently decentralized educational system in the face of the general economic constraints currently facing the country, the perceived benefits of such policy changes and an examination of the division of responsibilities between central support and the role of the local community. It is important to understand the context within which those problems and benefits have been derived. Hence, the study also investigates the extent of involvement of stakeholders (district office administrators, headmasters, teachers, parents, and community leaders) in school decision making under the decentralized educational system.

Statement of the Problem

The study examines the perceptions of stakeholders' extent of involvement in school decision making as well as problems and benefits perceived under the new educational system introduced in September 1987. A number of specific questions served as guides to the development of the study and to the analysis of the data:

1. What are the perceptions of stakeholders' overall extent of actual involvement as compared to their preferred involvement in school decision making under Ghana's decentralized school system?

2. Are there any differences between stakeholders' level of actual involvement as compared with the level of preferred involvement?

3. What are the perceptions of various stakeholder groups' extent of their actual and preferred involvement in school decision making?

4. Are there any differences among stakeholder groups with respect to their perceptions of actual and preferred involvement?

5. What are the perceptions of stakeholders of the extent of problems under the decentralized system?

6. Are there any differences among stakeholder groups with respect to their perceptions of the quality of schooling as indicated by the extent of problems under the decentralized system?

7. What are the perceptions of stakeholders of the extent of benefits under the decentralized system?

8. Are there any differences among stakeholder groups with respect to their perceptions of the quality of schooling as indicated by the extent of benefits under the decentralized system?

Questionnaire data were used as the main instrument to test the following hypotheses, each of which is associated with one or several of the research questions:

1. There would be no significant differences among stakeholders' perceptions of the extent of their actual involvement as compared to the extent of their preferred involvement in school decision making under the decentralized system.

2. There would be no significant differences among the stakeholder groups with respect to the extent to which solutions to potential problems due to decentralization have been obtained.

3. There would be no significant differences among the stakeholder groups with respect to their perceptions of the benefits that have been derived under the decentralized system.

Significance of the Study

Over the last few decades, the control of educational decision-making power by a central authority (centralization) and the dispersal of such power to lower levels within an institution (decentralization) have attracted the attention of many writers, including: Daniel (1971), Carlisle (1974), Dessler (1976), Hughes (1977), Bray (1984), Harman (1985), Caldwell, Smilanich & Spinks (1988), Beare, Caldwell & Millikan (1989), Brown (1990) and Jackson (1991). It appears then that the pendulum is now swinging towards decentralized policies since there is ample support for the idea that popular participation in educational decision-making favors educational improvement. As Ewanyshyn (1986) indicated, today there is an increasing emphasis on the involvement of public and professional interest groups in the process of educational decision-making at various organizational levels.

A few questions arise from such considerations. When an educational system is said to be decentralized, to what extent does it truly decentralize, for example, from the classroom teacher's perspective? Who really are to exercise the devolved decision-making power? Who should decide on what? Under a new system are people aware of the new roles they are supposed to assume? Answers to these questions are crucial to the formulation of appropriate policies in educational decision making. For example, there is the need to avoid possible conflicts arising out of duplication of roles between the district political head and district director of education, between the office administrator and the school principal, or between a parent and the teacher. There is the need to avoid waste of scarce educational resources and human efforts.

The study will therefore be useful to two categories of people: (a) educators (district office and school-based administrators as well as teachers), and (b) parents and community leaders. The process of decentralization in Ghana creates a new type of control in education in the school districts. It has meant, for example, the transfer of decision-making in educational issues to school-level educators and people in the local community. The onus of educational control falls on these people in the new process. It is, therefore, important that they understand the roles they are required to play in educational service delivery. Such an understanding might make them feel more committed to playing such roles. It is also important that they become conversant with the problems as well as the benefits derived in order to avoid pitfalls. They might then be able to plan effectively for future programs regarding issues such as budgeting, procurement of resources, staffing, and a relevant curriculum for the success of education within the local community.

GHANA

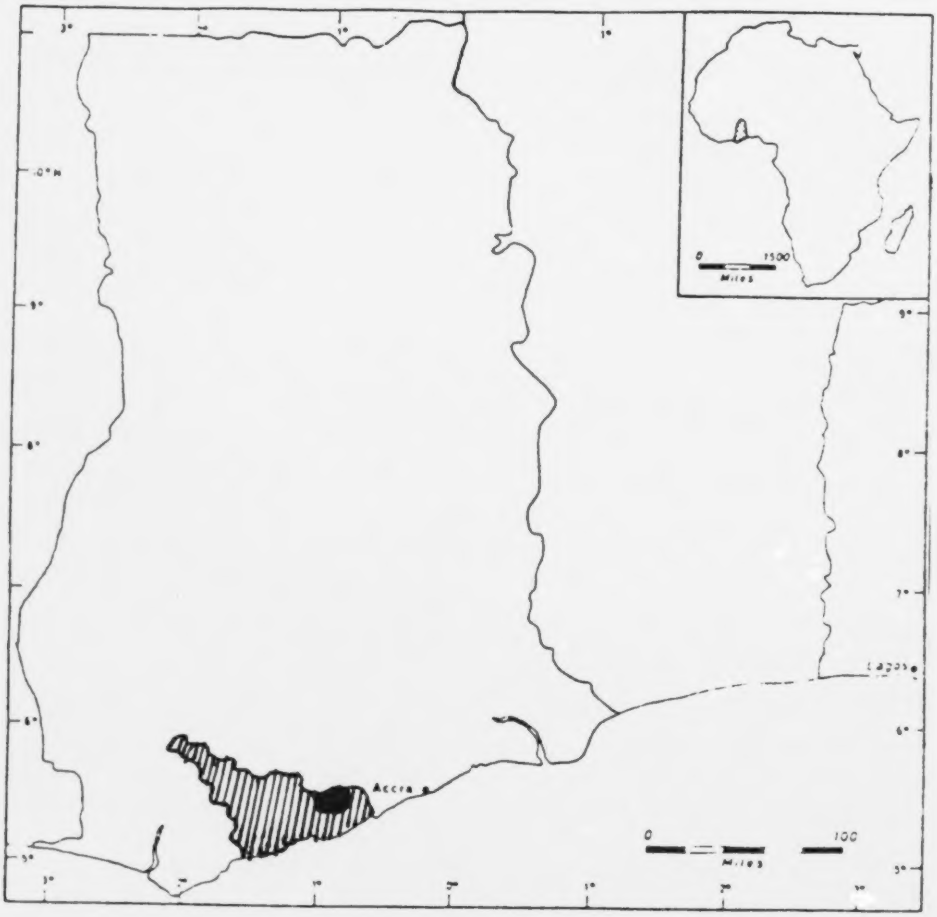


Figure 1

LEGEND:

▨ Central Region

■ Agona Swedru District

Inset is a map of Africa showing the location of Ghana

Limitations and Delimitations

The limitations and delimitations associated with the study are as follows:

1. The study is delimited to a decentralized elementary educational system (primary and junior secondary schools) in Ghana.

2. The participants are the district office and school-based administrators, teachers, parents and community leaders. These participants were selected for the study because they occupy key positions which, all other things being equal, should make them aware of the operations of the educational system and all its ramifications.

3. As a case study, the findings reflect data collected in one school district, Agona Swedru district in the Central Region of Ghana. See map (Figure 1). This might limit the extent to which the findings can be applied to all the 110 school districts in the country.

4. The findings were limited to individual perceptions within the period of data collection. Such perceptions are prone to distortions that may affect the findings of the study. This observation notwithstanding, it was still considered important to undertake the research since it might draw the attention of policy makers and stakeholders in Ghana's educational system to those aspects of its operation which require a critical review.

5. A pilot study was conducted in Edmonton to provide a vehicle for examining the format and the content validity of the instruments for data collection in Ghana. This was done for practical purposes, but it raises issues related to ecological validity (Baine, 1987, pp. 22-24).

Although the instruments were developed with great care and carefully assessed by the researcher who is a Ghanaian, and who has considerable experience with Ghanaian education, having conducted the pilot study in Canada rather than

Ghana must be viewed as a potential limitation. For a more complete discussion of the issues related to ecological validity, see page 174 in the final chapter of the thesis.

Explanation of Terms

Accra: the administrative capital of Ghana, located on the coast, about 28 kilometres east of the port of Tema (located on the Greenwich Meridian).

Agona Swedru District: one of the twelve political and administrative districts of the Central Region of Ghana. Ghana is currently divided into ten political and administrative regions. These regions and districts are coterminous with educational regions and districts.

Agona District Assembly: A 73-member District Legislature made up of:

- the PNDC District Secretary (political head of the district)
- 48 elected members
- 24 appointed members

Cedi: a unit of the national currency of Ghana. One cedi (C1.00) is made up of 100 pesewas. The current official exchange rate is C335 to $1 Canadian.

Decentralization: the transfer of administrative powers from a central to a local authority. Decentralization in education involves a reorganization of the administrative functions in order to provide greater autonomy at the school district level.

District Secretary: a district political head who performs functions as a representative of the PNDC government in the district.

Elementary education: Elementary education in Ghana includes the first nine years of schooling and is free and universal for all children aged normally between 6 and 15 years. The nine-year basic education consists of six years of primary and three years of Junior Secondary School (J.S.S.) and may be terminal or continuing (1989 Education and Culture Annual Estimates, p. 2).

Ghana: an English speaking West African country, about one-third the size of the province of Alberta. It has a population of about 16 million.

P.N.D.C.: Provisional National Defence Council: the incumbent ruling military government of Ghana. It was established by proclamation after a military take-over of the previous civilian administration on December 31, 1981. The chairman of the Council, a military officer, is the current head of state. The government at present has a number of civilians holding top political appointments.

Headmaster/headmistress: the administrative head of a junior or senior secondary school, this position is equivalent to a school principal in Canada.

Workshop: a structure or a building (usually located near a school), equipped with work benches and tools, where students learn practical skills such as carpentry, tailoring or dressmaking, leather-work, basket weaving and other handicrafts.

Assumptions

Education service delivery is such a complex task that it requires the contributions of people at various levels in society to make the service effective and efficient. A number of identifiable groups in the delivery of education service were therefore invited to participate in the study.

Two basic assumptions underlay the study:

1. The participants in the study would be aware of changes in the decentralized system due to decentralization and would have formed opinions with respect to the strengths and weaknesses of the new system.

2. The participants would be willing to express their opinions freely in response to the questionnaire and interview questions.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter I of the thesis has introduced the study with regard to its rationale and the problem posed for the study. The study's significance is also explained, factors delimiting as well as limiting the scope of the study are then reported. Assumptions underlying the study are subsequently stated. Methods and procedures used to carry out the study are discussed in Chapter II. A review of the relevant literature is presented in Chapter III. Analyses of the data are presented in the next three chapters. Chapter IV contains analysis and discussion of the extent of stakeholders' actual and preferred involvement in school decision making. Perceived problems of the decentralized school system are analyzed in Chapter V. Analysis of the perceived benefits of the decentralized school system is presented in Chapter VI. Chapter VII, the final chapter, provides a summary and conclusions of the findings. Next, the chapter discusses implications for practice. Subsequently it offers some suggestions for further study. The chapter closes with a final word for policy makers.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Maynes (1990, p. 16) wrote, "to consider the methodology of a study is to consider the techniques and approaches used for data collection and analysis." This chapter entails a discussion of (1) the questionnaire and interview procedures, (2) the pilot study carried out in Edmonton prior to data collection in Ghana, (3) the sample, and (4) the method adopted in analyzing the data.

Given the quantitative design of the study, a questionnaire was selected as the primary technique for gathering data. As Karges and Bowles (1979), Borg and Gall (1989) point out, the use of questionnaire makes research more objective, comprehensive and less costly. It facilitates wide coverage, anonymity, ease of tabulation and analysis. This is supported by Cohen and Manion (1989, p. 319) who also noted that a questionnaire study

> tends to be more reliable because it is anonymous, encourages greater honesty, more economic in terms of time and money, and there is there is the possibility that it may be mailed.

Its disadvantages such as lack of flexibility and the possibility of low response, possible problems it may present to people of limited literacy, and the fact that it might be filled hurriedly, were borne in mind thus enabling measures to be taken to control them so that adverse effects, if any, would be minimal.

In this case, lack of flexibility on the questionnaire, for example, was counteracted by supplementing questionnaire data with some interview data. Also in some cases where limited literacy was evident, the questionnaire was completed with the help of the researcher ensuring that the respondent's actual views were reflected in the response.

Development of the Questionnaire

A review of the literature revealed important issues which are reflected in the research questions. Based on these issues a list of questionnaire items necessary for the study was developed. Selection of the items was done on the basis of suggestions from the supervisor, graduate student colleagues and from the researcher's own experience. Altogether approximately fifty-eight decentralization items were reviewed. The questions were basically close-ended.

The criteria for the selection of the items included relevance, clarity and conciseness. Part A of the questionnaire requested demographic information about respondents. This information related to (1) position; (2) gender; and (3) place of residence.

Part B requested respondents to indicate the extent of their actual and preferred involvement on a number of school issues. This design was intended to help identify any discrepancies in the new system as observed by participants. As Johnson (1984) pointed out, when examining discrepancies, two Likert-type scales -- one measuring the extent to which a situation actually exists and another measuring the extent to which the situation is preferred to exist is superior to single column Likert-type questions. The following is a sample of the questions:

For each school issue you are asked to report your opinion on the extent to which you are actually able to influence decisions and the extent of influence you would prefer to have granted to your school.

		A Great Deal (1)	A Fair Amount (2)	Very Little (3)	Almost None (4)	Don't Know (5)
1. Allocation of School Funds	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Eleven categories of issues pertaining to participation in school decision-making were included in Part B of the questionnaire. These were (1) school funds; (2) design of courses; (3) classroom instruction; (4) staff appointment; (5) salaries; (6) quality of teaching staff; (7) discipline; (8) in-service training; (9) size of classes; (10) school supplies; and (11) extra-curricular activities. Individual items did not follow any specific order but were presented at random. This was done to prevent the impression that some issues were more important than others.

Part C of the questionnaire focused on educational decentralization problems. In this section participants were asked to indicate whether an item was a major problem or not a problem under Ghana's new educational system. The questionnaire listed fifteen items selected on the basis of problems that had been identified in the literature as well as the researcher's own experience of Ghana's old educational system. Thus decentralization problems listed were: (1) government and local resources; (2) implementation procedures; (3) policy makers' expertise; (4) devolution of power; (5) constraints from the centre; (6) community's role; (7) responsibilities at various levels; (8) exercising proper control; (9) community commitment; (10) incentives; (11) criticism; (12) education on the new system; and (13) community's readiness. Respondents were requested to indicate to what extent an issue was a problem. For this purpose a five-point Likert-type scales ranging from *Not a Problem* to *Major Problem* were provided. A sample of the questions is shown below.

With regard to potential problems that could result from the new educational system, please circle a number in each of the following items to indicate the extent to which you regard each item as a problem.

1. Insufficient resources are allocated to schools.
   Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem

Since the list of problems presented was definitely not exhaustive, respondents were provided with the opportunity to indicate any other problems they had perceived under the new system.

Part D of the questionnaire focused on the benefits of the new decentralized system as perceived by the respondents. The format of the questionnaires in this section was similar to that of Part C. In this case, however, the issues were related to the benefits of decentralization. Categories of items listed were: (1) resources; (2) opportunities for participation; (3) accountability; (4) understanding of school management; (5) stimulation of new leaders; (6) responsiveness of the community and staff; (7) program choice; (8) staff development; (9) division of roles; (10) flexibility; (11) monitoring; (12) student achievement; and (13) skills and attitudes.

A sample of the questions is shown below.

With regard to perceived benefits under the new educational system, please circle a number in each of the following items to indicate the extent to which you perceive an item as a benefit to be derived.

1. Improved mobilization of local resources.
   Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit

Similar to Part C, this section provided respondents the opportunity to list other perceived benefits not listed. This kind of question was the only open-ended item on the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter explaining the nature and purpose of the research to participants (Appendix A).

Internal Validity

Validity with regards to questionnaire as a research instrument refers to the extent to which the questionnaire effectively measures what it is supposed to measure (Ary, et al.,1980 & Eichelberger (1989). Such validity depends on the purpose for which the data are gathered and the ways they will be used. In this study, taking steps to ensure content validity became crucial for the success of the study. The pilot study was, in a large part, designed to serve this purpose. The literature review also contributed to this. Thus each question related to the problem under investigation and there was adequate coverage of the overall topic.

There was also a serious consideration with regard to the clarity of each question in order to avoid ambiguity. In order to achieve this objective, a number of people including principals, teachers and parents assumed to be knowledgeable in the topic were invited to examine the items systematically and indicate whether or not they represent sufficiently the theoretical universe from which they were drawn. They were asked to make judgements on the content validity on the basis of their expertise in the field. On the basis of their observations the questions were reframed where necessary. Necessary additions were also made.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which a measuring device is consistent in measuring whatever it measures (Fraas, 1983, p. 150). Ary, et al. (1980, p. 204) contended that three of the methods commonly used for estimating reliability of an instrument are (1) test-retest (administering test to the same group on two occasions and correlating the paired scores); (2) equivalent-forms (alternate or parallel-form techniques used when it is probable that subjects will recall their responses to the test items; and (3) split-half (getting a measure of reliability from a single administration of one form of a test by using split-half procedures).

In this sense reliability or consistency of the questionnaire as an instrument was difficult to establish. It was in consideration of this fact that Mouly (1978) concluded that ensuring validity might be a better investment of one's time and energy. Therefore, as Ewanyshin (1986) considered, no statistical procedures were adopted to determine the reliability of the questionnaires developed for this study. It is important to point out, however, that a pilot study was conducted in Edmonton to help in establishing the content validity of the instruments before they were used in Ghana. The actual instruments for the study were designed and printed in Canada and sent for use in Ghana.

Interviews

It has been asserted that both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques can contribute to policy studies (Maynes, 1990, p. 10). This is in agreement with Pawney and Watts's (1987, p. 26) suggestion that "in some cases interviews can supplement some other main source" of data. In this study, although the questionnaire was the primary data gathering technique, some data were also gathered through interviews and document analysis. The rationale behind conducting interviews, as Borg and Gall (1989, p. 446) noted, was that they permitted "greater depth than other methods of collecting data -- probe deeply enough to provide a true picture of opinions and feelings."

Three types of interview schedule outlining the areas to be probed were prepared along the lines suggested by Jackson (1988, p. 31). These interview schedules were meant to guide the collection of data to supplement the questionnaire data. In this sense the study had a qualitative component. The interviews were primarily semi-structured, (Appendices C to E) and were used to seek more information to clarify the issues raised in the questionnaire from the three categories of respondents: (a) office educational administrators; (b) headmasters/mistresses and teachers; and (c) parents and community leaders. The individual questions were identical in some respects, for example, the opening question asked all interviewees: *"What do you think of the new system as compared to the system that was in* *operation before 1987?"* The purpose as suggested by Borg and Gall (1989, p. 445), was to expose all respondents to a "nearly identical" experience. This was to ensure that the responses would lend themselves to tabulation and analysis.

In view of the leading role played by the government in Ghana's current decentralization, it was also found beneficial to interview a number of persons with key political responsibilities in the district. For this purpose a different interview schedule was prepared, (Appendix F). The following stakeholders were then earmarked to be interviewed: (1) the PNDC District Secretary (the political head of the district); (2) the District Administrative Officer; (3) the Presiding Member of the District Assembly; (4) the District Budget Officer; and (5) the District Planning Officer. With the exception of the Presiding Member who was unable to be contacted, all other officers were interviewed.

Pilot Study

A pilot study involving district office administrators, principals, teachers and parents was conducted in Edmonton during the Winter and Spring of 1991. The purposes of the pilot study were to determine the suitability and adequacy of the questionnaire and interview items, and to examine the validity of the instruments.

In the pilot study a sample from each category of participants was asked to complete a questionnaire. Likert-type of questionnaires were developed from the model suggested by Charles (1988), Johnson (1989) and Cohen & Marion (1989). Responses and comments from the participants revealed several weaknesses in the questionnaire which were then corrected.

Interviews embodying sample questions for use in the actual study were conducted with an Associate Superintendent in Edmonton Public School District, two principals in elementary and junior-high schools, two teachers and two parents. It did not, however, become feasible to identify and interview community leaders in Edmonton.

Thus the pilot study provided a vehicle for examining the format and content of the questionnaires and interviews. It provided useful information about the items in the sense that items which were easily misinterpreted or which were found to be ambiguous were identified. Useful suggestions were provided by several of the respondents.

In conclusion, the pilot study provided a solid foundation and contributed to the success of this study.

The Sample

A total sample of 300 participants made up of 26 office-based educational administrators, 50 headmasters/mistresses and headteachers (principals), 134 teachers, 60 parents, and 30 community leaders was selected. Table 1 presents the distribution of the questionnaire sample. Respondents were selected from all six circuits in the Agona Swedru education district of the Central Region of Ghana. Data collection was done during the months of May, June and July, 1991. Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents.

This table shows the actual returns by number, percentage, and positions of the five categories of respondents.

The District Director of Education and all the other 25 district office administrators were selected for the study. Stratified random sampling from amongnon-denominational, denominational (greater) and denominational (lesser) schools was employed in selecting the Primary and Junior Secondary School (JSS) principals and teachers. The stratified random sampling was employed to allow for the comparison of findings on the basis of different types of schools.

It is essential to point out that although schools involved in the study are all public which are supposed to receive equal funding from the state, many schools are denominational and, therefore, receive additional support from their churches. Also among the denominational schools, some receive more support than others because their supporting churches are larger and wealthier. Such larger and wealthier churches are Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian.

Table 1
Questionnaire Sample

Schools	Teachers	Principals	Parents	Comm. Leaders	Office Adm.
1. Non-Denominational	34	12	15	30	26
2. Denominational (Greater)					
Catholic	15	6			
Methodist	15	6	15		
Presbyterian	15	6			
3. Denominational (Lesser)					
Ahmadiyya	11	4			
A.M.E. Zion	11	4	30		
Anglican	11	4			
Salvation Army	11	4			
Seventh Day Adventist	11	4			
Totals	134	50	60	30	26

Table 2
Distribution of Questionnaire Responses by Position

Position	Number Distributed	Number Returned	Return Rate (%)
Dist. Office Admin.	26	26	100
Principals	50	45	90
Teachers	134	84	63
Parents	60	54	90
Community Leaders	30	26	87
Unspecified*	1	1	100
TOTAL	300	236*	79

* One respondent completed the questionnaire, but did not identify the position.

The other smaller churches are the Ahmadiyya, A.M.E. Zion, Anglican, Salvation Army and Seventh Day Adventist. Non-denominational schools are those outside the auspices of the religious organizations. These schools established by the Agona District Council (ADC) are commonly referred to as ADC Primary or ADC Junior Secondary school. It was for this reason, the schools were categorized into three groups: (1) Non-Denominational, (2) Greater Denominational, and (3) Lesser Denominational.

Enrollment size of schools was not used as criteria for selecting schools for the survey since enrollment size was not considered a significant deciding factor in respondents' opinions and perceptions. Schools were selected to include both primary and junior secondary schools.

Distribution of the Questionnaire

Borg and Gall (1989) mentioned the need for researchers to precontact their sample prior to conducting a study. Bearing this advice in mind the researcher wrote to the District Director of Education as well as the Statistics Officer informing them of the proposed study. Upon returning to Ghana, the researcher personally contacted these two officers in order to confirm the required permission from the Director to conduct survey in the office and schools and to discuss the modalities for the questionnaire distribution and collection.

A complete list of all primary and JSS was obtained from the District Education Statistics Officer. Measures were taken to ensure that the questionnaire distribution covered all categories of schools as proportionally as possible. See Table 1.

The Statistics Officer was appointed a research assistant whose role was to assist in the proportional distribution of the questionnaires to all six circuits as well as the collection of the completed questionnaires.

Most of the questionnaires for the District Education Officers were, however, distributed and collected personally. The researcher was fortunate in that the data collection coincided with a period when all principals met at Swedru, the District headquarters, for a one-week program in Science and Maths teaching. This afforded a unique opportunity for the questionnaire distribution and collection. Collection of the questionnaires from other respondents was done largely by the research assistant. In a few cases, however, it became necessary to follow up with reminders to respondents in some cases to contact them in their residences for collection.

A few respondents, mainly teachers, asked whether there would be some payment for responding to the questionnaires since they (questionnaires) had come all the way from Canada. The researcher tactfully explained that although they had come from Canada, responding to them would not attract any remuneration. In spite of this lack of remuneration, it was very encouraging to note that quite a number of respondents were so cooperative that they returned their filled-in questionnaires to the researcher in his residence. There was a very good return rate (79%). See Table 2.

In one case, however, a community leader who had collected a questionnaire later indicated that he was not in a position to respond to it because he had not been involved in any way in the new educational system. It was explained that the questionnaire provided ample opportunity for him to indicate such feeling and opinion. This explanation notwithstanding, he declined to respond to the questionnaire.

A few respondents also asked whether they could obtain copies of the final report on the study. It was explained that owing to the cost involved, it would not be possible to send individual copies, but that a copy would be placed with the District Director's Office for the benefit of all.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The distribution of demographic characteristics of participants is presented in Table 3. An organizational variable namely, position of participants, was examined. Two personal variables, gender and place of residence, were also examined.

Participants were asked to indicate whether their positions in the organizational structure of the educational system were: (1) district office administrator; (2) headmaster/headmistress/headteacher; (3) teacher; (4) parent; or (5) community leader. These were people expected to perform some roles in educational decision-making. It was therefore imperative to assess the extent to which they had opportunities to perform such roles. Information on gender was requested in order to determine whether there was any significant difference between the roles performed and opinions held by women as against those of men. For the same reason, information was requested on those living in towns and those living in villages.

Analysis of Data

In all 300 questionnaires were issued and there were 236 usable returns, representing a 79% return rate. The questionnaire invited information in four areas.

Part A. demographic information

Part B. extent of involvement in school decision-making

Part C. perceived problems in the new educational system

Part D. perceived benefits in the new educational system.

With the exception of the last questions in Parts C and D of the questionnaire which asked respondents to indicate other problems and benefits respectively, all questions were close ended. These were categorized under specific codes through the computer. Analyses were then made through the use of frequency tables, percentages, means, standard deviation and F tests and T tests.

With regard to interviews, all answers to various questions were carefully compiled and categorized according to respondents' positions. Predominant views for each question in each category were then extracted. These views are reported when appropriate during the discussion of the analysis of the questionnaire data.

Table 3

Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Position	*Residence	Gender	No.	%
District Office Administrators	Town	Male	19	73.1
		Female	7	26.9
Principals	Town	Male	27	60.0
		Female	6	13.3
	Village	Male	12	26.7
		Female	0	0.0
Teachers	Town	Male	37	47.6
		Female	12	14.6
	Village	Male	23	28.0
		Female	8	9.8
Parents	Town	Male	27	51.9
		Female	6	11.5
	Village	Male	9	17.3
		Female	10	19.2
Community Leaders	Town	Male	14	58.3
		Female	2	8.3
	Village	Male	6	25.0
		Female	2	8.3

*Residence: *Respondent's place of residence, (town or village)*

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical and research background of the major issues involved in the shift from centralization to decentralization in decision-making in the administration of nations as well as organizations. Specifically, the review focuses on theoretical issues pertaining to community involvement in a decentralized school system, rationale for decentralizing, problems encountered and benefits derived therefrom.

First, to provide an appropriate context, it was considered important to review the concept of decentralization, including a definition, forms of decentralization and involvement. The purpose was not only to explicate the concept, but also to provide an understanding of some of the important contextual and situational factors related to decentralization. A definition of decentralization results from this analysis. Second, in order to understand the extent of justification for decentralization, the rationale for decentralization is reviewed, followed by identifying some of the benefits of decentralization. Next, problems of decentralization are reviewed for the purpose of identifying types of potential problems related to the concept. Subsequently, current practices in four countries are examined to provide some framework with which Ghana's decentralization could be analyzed. Finally Ghana's version of decentralization is examined. Ghana's decentralization is the focus of the study. It is therefore considered important to review the structure of that system in order to provide a background within which the study was conducted.

The Concept of Decentralization

In this section the concept of decentralization is examined with regard to its definition, participation which is its primary objective, as well as some of the forms it has assumed in current systems as identified in the literature.

Definition

The main aims of decentralization, according to Okulo-Epak (1985) are to improve the delivery of government policies, services and development to the lower levels, as well as to promote grass-roots participation in deciding their needs and contributing to development efforts. Development efforts include a people's attempt to mobilize resources to provide social amenities such as schools, hospitals, housing, water, electricity, and roads. These efforts also include the provision of social services such as education, health, welfare and transportation.

Bray (1984) noted, however, that in the analysis of decentralization, the first obstacle is that the term is vague and embraces a multitude of processes and structures. Aryeetey, Boakye, Awua-Boateng and Dotse (1988) argued that the term is beset with confusion and thus means different things to different people. The terms centralization and decentralization have been used in so many different ways that they have almost lost their meaning (Mintzberg, 1983).

In spite of the lack of a universally accepted definition, Aryeetey, et al. (1988, p. 11) suggested that "decentralization is the reversal of power concentration at a single centre by the dispersal of that power from an institution to subordinate levels in a territorial hierarchy." Decentralization, then, is the transfer of administrative power from a central to a local authority. In education, Eghan and Odum (1989) pointed out that decentralization involves a redistribution of responsibility and authority in choice-making for delivering education in ways which make the participants accountable for their contribution or non-contribution for total educational delivery. Hughes (1977) described the process of decentralization as a devolution from the centre.

Bray (1984) has observed that forms of government can be arranged along a continuum, with highly centralized systems at one end and highly decentralized ones at the other. Accordingly different forms of decentralization can be identified along such a continuum.

Forms of Decentralization

Several authors have pointed out that decentralization as a process has assumed several forms. Okulo-Epak (1985, p. 29), for example, suggested that with respect to governmental decentralization, three major levels or hierarchies of administration exist, and the criteria for determining the boundaries often include political factors, ethnic homogeneity, natural features, combining units or using acceptable names as local, geographical or prominent features. These levels are as follows:

High Level - Central or National
Middle Level - Regional
Lower Levels - District, City or Local

At each of these these levels, decentralization can take one of four forms. Rondinelli (1981), Okulo-Epak (1985), Bray (1984), Conyers (1983), Rondinelli, Middleton & Vespoor (1990) and Mintzberg (1983) are among those who identify deconcentration, delegation and devolution as three of the forms. Rondinelli (1983) and Okulo-Epak (1985) have identified privatization as a fourth form of decentralization. Bray (1984) pointed out that some systems are decentralized in some aspects and centralized in other aspects and that categorization is much more difficult than appears at first sight . A brief description of each of these of these forms follows:

Deconcentration : When a centralized administration introduces extra branches of government without handing over significant decision-making powers, the administration is said to be deconcentrated. A central authority deconcentrates when it establishes field units, and Bray (1984) pointed out that sometimes deconcentration merely extends central government power and improves supervision, but it can be a stage towards greater local sensitivity and local influence. When it is more than mere reorganization, it gives some discretion to field agents to plan and implement programs and projects, or to adjust central directives to local conditions, with guidelines from the central ministry or agency headquarters. Thus as Rondinelli, Middleton and Verspoor (1990) have stated, it is the most frequently used and the most limited approach to decentralization. Rondinelli and Nelli (1983) pointed out that deconcentration is a strategy that has been frequently used in Indonesia, Thailand, Pakistan, Tunisia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Morocco and elsewhere.

Delegation: Decentralization is carried further when powers are delegated. Thus it is a more extensive form of decentralization (Rondinelli, et al., 1990). It implies a greater degree of decision-making power at the local level, though powers in a delegated system still basically rest with the central authority which has chosen to 'lend' them to the local one. Referring to the process of delegation, Rondinelli and Nelli (1983) have observed that it has been in use in Latin American countries where governments have delegated a wide range of functions to public authorities, from the production of essential inputs for industrialization through to the management of social services.

Devolution: Powers are most firmly decentralized when they are devolved. Therefore, devolution is the most decentralized system of administration for, in a devolved system, decision-making powers have been formally transferred to local bodies. It involves the strengthening of subnational units of governments such as states, provinces, or municipalities. This is true of federal systems such as those of Canada, the U.S.A., Australia (Caldwell & Spinks,1988) and Nigeria and Papua New Guinea (Rondinelli & Nelli, 1983).

Privatization: Privatization occurs when governments divest themselves of functions such as the production of goods or the supply of services by transferring them to private voluntary organizations or allowing them to be performed by the private sector (Aryeetey, et al., 1988) and (Rondinelli, et al. (1990). Such functions have often been transferred to national and industrial and trade associations, professional groups, religious organizations and political parties or co-operatives (Rondinelli & Nelli, 1983). Schiefelbein (1985) postulated that, in much of Latin America, private schools tend to provide better overall instruction than do public schools at both the primary and secondary levels, offer instruction in foreign languages, dance, music, crafts, and vocational skills in lower grade levels, and provide better sports and educationally related activities.

Mintzberg's (1979) proposed another useful framework for examining forms of decentralization:

Administrative/Organizational: where parents' input is felt but control is left to accountable professionals at the school site.

Political/Economic: a structure within which authority is given to groups, such as parents or citizens in general, to control school districts or schools. This is a decentralization from departments or ministries of education to school districts. Benson (1978), however, argued that complete decentralization is inappropriate and the reasons are: (1) education benefits the wider society but not all districts would or could provide quality programs; (2) revenue generation would depend more severely on poorer persons; (3) there would be lack of curricular control; and (4) it requires vision and expertise to forecast educational needs.

Horizontal: dispersal of authority to non-line or staff members who may be resident at any level in the organization, for example, when the authority of the Superintendent is shared with the central office staff, not just line. It reduces the decision-making power of the lower line managers. It can happen at the school level where staff members are given authority to make decisions.

Vertical: the extent to which decision-making authority is shared down the hierarchy of management. It involves line persons from the chief executive to the lowest subordinate. This decision-making authority can be placed within any role in the line of authority. For example, a school district would be more vertically decentralized as the locus of authority progressed from the board, superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, head of department to the teacher.

Selective: only certain kinds of decisions are dispersed to the organization while others are retained, for example, retaining final decisions at the strategic apex but moving production decisions to the first line supervisors. Brown (1990, p. 38) explained that in the school situation selective decisions could be made with regard to utilities, maintenance and expert services that could be retained by the central office.

Parallel: dispersal of many (but not all) decisions to the same place. In a school, parallel decentralization could mean that the authority of those in the school encompasses a much greater proportion of the resources they typically consume.

Staples (1975, p. 4) also referred to three forms of decentralization: (1) administrative decentralization, (2) community participation, and (3) community control. According to him administrative decentralization breaks a system into administrative or smaller units, and sometimes these units are further subdivided. By breaking down the system, in theory, the administration is brought closer to the schools and central office. This breakdown also paves the way for the community to exercise some control over educational decision-making.

Two major points have been made in this section: (1) decentralization can be defined in several ways; (2) decentralization can assume several forms. A country or an institution can adopt any form depending on its situation and the objectives which the decentralization policy is designed to achieve. The primary objective is that power for decision-making at the centre should be dispersed down the administrative ladder so as to foster participation at the sub-national levels. The issues involved in such participation are therefore crucial to the understanding of the concept of decentralization.

Participation at Sub-national Levels

Beare (1977, p. 161) noted that when we refer to 'participation in education' we are asking who are the main actors, the ones without whom the play cannot begin at all. She also contended that in education the main actors, apart from students, are teachers and that the prime mover in community education is the school. She further emphasized that findings which emerge from educational research are that

(1) parents are one of the most powerful determinants of educational achievement outweighing in their impact and influence (some scholars claim) all the inputs which the school and teachers can provide.

(2) the community provides resources for education far in excess of what any school can provide; and

(3) community values, community ethos and tone dominate educational influences;

For these reasons, Okulo-Epak (1985) pointed out that in a decentralized system, educational planning and development should involve mobilizing a particular group, village or community to participate in the process of decision-making, plan preparation and actual implementation of development plans in the location. In a decentralized school budgeting, for example, Neale, Baile and Ross (1981, p. 17) argued that:

> Although it is tempting to equate efficiency and cost-cutting with an autocratic centralized administrative plans, in fact, improved efficiency, as opposed to reducing expenditures, requires the participation of those throughout the organization. Thus a decentralized approach to financial control is recommended.

Staples (1975) suggested that community participation usually results in the formation of advisory committees comprising various combinations of representatives of parents, community residents without children attending public schools, teachers, administrators, students, local business, political, religious, and social agencies. On community control, Staples (1975, p. 5) said:

> Carried to the fullest extent, it means decision making power by the community (or so-called representatives from the community) over personnel (hiring, firing, and promoting), curriculum (course electives, ordering textbooks), student policy (student-teacher relations, discipline, testing and evaluation), and financing (federal funding, allocation of money, even determination of the budget). In short, the powers of the professional educators are abridged -- an act most school personnel reject.

Community participation has therefore emerged as a strategy in social development generally and in educational development in developing countries particularly in the past few decades (Okulo-Epak, 1985, p. 118). He pointed out that research in the behavioral sciences and evaluation of urban development trends have generated the awareness that clients should not be treated as passive recipients of welfare since this creates a negative or alienating impact on them. He further observed that clients excluded from the very processes that help to define their problems and formulate means to overcome them, suffer from development deficiency, rendering them unwilling to utilize and maintain what they have been given.

In developing countries like Ghana, it has been observed that because of policies that have been inherently maldistributional, development programs have failed to alleviate poverty. Lillis (1988, p. 85), for example, asserted that "although equality of opportunities is among the goals of most governments, the majority of educational systems exhibit glaring inequalities." Policies become maldistributional when they result in unequal distribution of development projects such as schools with the result that some localities have many more schools than they need while others have fewer than they need. But where equitable distribution of development projects has been achieved it is often found that there has been a high level of participation by the communities in development programs. For this reason, Okulo-Epak (1985) cautioned that development policies should focus on participative possibilities. In Ghana, such calls may have fallen on sympathetic ears within Government circles, leading to a declaration of participatory democracy as the rallying call for national development. He suggested that in practice, participation is seen as a continuum with various levels of participation, extent of authority and power with which the participants operate. The two extremes are believed to be participant control, where the participants have all the decision-making powers, to a level of participation where the participant is a mere figurehead.

According to Okulo-Epak, (1985), several factors influence the degree of control exercised by the group participants: (1) political awareness, (2) political latitude prevailing in a given environment, (3) the strength of conviction and interest to achieve a given end, and (4) the strength and effectiveness of the people's organization.

Participation then, is not a one way street. Aryeetey, et al. (1989) suggested that steps must be taken in building up a management model to link the community based management machinery and the government's technical and administrative officials at the local planning level. This reciprocal arrangement ensures the promulgation of planning and development partnership between the public sector agencies and the community at large.

Therefore, under decentralization, steps must be taken to avoid treating the community members as passive and illiterate participants. If the community participates, decentralization in education as well as other sectors of the governmental machinery is likely to lead to the perceived benefits.

A Working Definition

For this study, therefore, political as well as administrative decentralization, is taken to be a systematic devolution of decision-making power in education from the national headquarters down the administrative hierarchy to the community level. This makes the individual principal together with a School Council the basic decision-making unit. The School Council, as suggested by Brown (1990, p. 168), Rondinelli, Middleton and Verspoor (1990, p. 99) and Johnson (1991, p. 7), is a representative body of the school and community. Its membership consists of the principal, teachers, support staff, parents, citizens and students where possible.

Rationale for Decentralization

Advocates of centralization argue that it makes it easy for national governments to direct the overall development efforts. It is generally observed that functions such as defence, internal security and foreign affairs should be conducted from the centre (Bray, 1984). According to Bray, advocates further argue that first, centralized administration can be more efficient than a decentralized one. Second, it can be less costly. Third, it avoids the danger of different regions competing with each other to the detriment of the whole. Finally, by permitting resources to be directed to the disadvantaged and needy areas, it can actually be more egalitarian. Conyers (1982) also pointed out that most of the objectives which decentralization is intended to achieve such as improvement in the management of rural development, cannot be achieved by decentralization alone. She argued that

in many cases governments mistakenly accuse centralization of being a political villain when in fact they should be looking at other political and economic factors.

In spite of the support for centralization, the current notion, as Taylor (1977) noted, is that the essence of good administration is complete delegation to the lowest competent level and that the more that routine is held at the centre, the more constipated the system tends to be. Carlisle (1974, p. 15) has, however, cautioned advocates of decentralization of the need to be aware of conditions relative to an organization that determines whether decentralization or centralization will be effective in any particular situation. This, he pointed out, stems from a contingency theory which holds that organizational structure is normally the dependent variable and other factors in the situation are independent variables. The procedures for addressing these factors are designed during the process of devolving decision making power.

The basic rationale behind the devolution of decision-making power is that it is advantageous to operate affairs in any human society through this approach (Eghan & Odum, 1989). Enhanced school improvement, for example, has been mentioned as a justification of change (Caldwell, Smilanich & Spinks, 1988). Dessler (1976, p. 106) has argued that:

> Even the classical theorists who have advocated hierarchical centralized organizations, have recognized that organizational responsibilities should be assigned to the lowest level in the organization at which sufficient competence and information for effective task performance exist.

Bray (1984) contended that one fundamental objective of decentralization in Papua New Guinea, as in most other countries, is to stimulate people to play a more active role in decision-making. According to Bray (1984, p. 115), the philosophy proclaimed by the 1974 Constitutional Planning Committee of Papua New Guinea was that:

> Power must be returned to the people. Decisions should be made by the people to whom the issues at stake are meaningful, easily understood and relevant. The existing system of government should therefore be restructured and power should be decentralized so that energies and aspirations of our people can play their full part in promoting our country's development.

It is for this reason that Bray (1984), has noted that a large number of decentralized schemes have been launched in both industrialized and less developed nations in the last several years, and they have been particularly popular among newly independent countries. Conyers (1983) also noted that there has been a growing interest in the issue of decentralization among a number of Third World countries, especially -- but not only -- in Africa. She noted that countries which have introduced significant organizational reforms described as, or having elements of 'decentralization' or are in the process of so doing include Tanzania, Zambia, the Sudan, Nigeria and Ghana in Africa. It is also worthy of note that decentralization in these countries has been widely supported by international agencies such as the

World Bank and the United States Agency for International Aid (USAID) (Bray, 1984). Decentralization initiatives in these Third World countries have followed the current decentralized systems in developed countries such as Canada, the United States of America, Britain and Australia.

Weiler (1990, p. 433) pointed out that policies of decentralizing the governance of educational systems, carry the seeds of their own contradictions and that there is a basic tension between decentralization on one hand and the tendency of the modern state to assert or reassert centralized control over the educational system on the other.

In spite of contradictions that may occur, decentralization may bring a number of benefits to a country or an institution that adopts it. Perhaps the major rationale behind decentralization is that countries or institutions that adopt it perceive that there may be some benefits to derive from it. The issue of decentralization benefits, particularly those related to education, are examined in the next section.

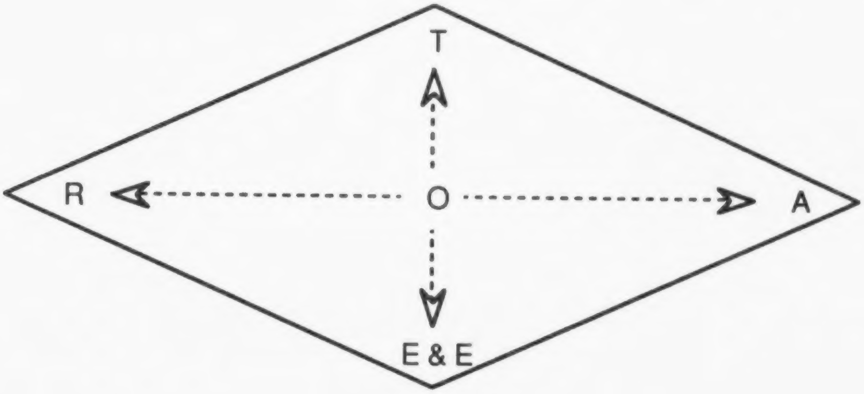
Educational Decentralization and Benefits

Reller (1974) and Bray (1984) have written about administrative and political decentralization. They explained that decentralization becomes administrative when policy decisions are made centrally but the implementation is done by the school administrators at the school level. Under political decentralization there is a setting up of decision-making bodies at the school or area level with specific powers and responsibilities conferred by legislation or action taken by the central body. Various authors have identified a variety of benefits likely to accrue to any country that embarks upon administrative or political decentralization processes.

Caldwell, Smilanich and Spinks (1988), Caldwell and Spinks (1988), Hughes (1977), Marburger (1985) and Parry (1990) are among the scholars who have argued that decentralization is probably appropriate in any situation. A variety of specific benefits could be derived from decentralization depending on a country's situation. Any country could analyze its own political, and socio-economic situation and draw appropriate policy guidelines that would ensure the success of decentralization. The Redcliffe-Maud Report of 1969 on educational decentralization in Australia, for example, recommended a reorganization of local education authorities, to create units small enough to develop a sense of common purpose but large enough to provide with reasonable economy a full range of ‘personal’ and ‘environmental’ services. These local authorities were to be in charge of managing the schools within their jurisdiction. Such local management should provide the opportunity for effective and efficient utilization of resources in the delivery of education. These resources, Caldwell and Spinks (1988) noted, include:

- knowledge (decentralization of decisions related to curriculum, including decisions related to the goals or ends of schooling);
- technology (decentralization of decisions related to the means of teaching and learning);
- power (decentralization of authority to make decisions);
- material (decentralization of decisions related to the use of facilities, supplies and equipment);
- people (decentralization of decisions related to the allocation of people in matters related to the teaching and learning, and the support of teaching and learning);
- time (decentralization of decisions related to the allocation of time); and
- finance (decentralization of decisions related to the allocation of money).

Decentralization under proper guidelines will not only provide for the efficient management of resources only but will also provide for accountability. Strain (1990) pointed out that at the heart of the task of management is the obligation to get things done; not anything at any price, but the right things done well and thriftily. Resources are the means whereby this management function is carried out, and the means whereby we get things done. Management under a decentralized system, on the other hand, can function effectively when rules and regulations have been laid down. This will help to define what should be done at what level to avoid duplication of functions. Parry (1990, p. 83) observed that under decentralization, "rules and regulations are designed to promote impartial decision-making, accountability, administrative consistency and efficiency, reduce uncertainty and arbitrariness, introduce flexibility, choice and competition, and reduce centralized bureaucracy." The major outcomes of decentralization: *structure, flexibility, accountability, productivity* and *change* can be illustrated as shown in Figure 2.



T = Transformation
R = Responsiveness
O = Organization
A = Accountability
E&E = Effectiveness and Efficiency

Figure 2
Decentralization Model *(Adapted from Brown, 1990, p. 262)*

Organization is at the centre and is linked to other major themes to indicate its unifying role. *Effectiveness and Efficiency* come at the bottom to indicate the support and importance it gives to decentralization. Alexandruk (1985, p. 23) stated that "effectiveness and efficiency imply that educational resources will be managed in such a way as to generate the greatest benefit to society at a cost which can be readily borne by the public." *Transformation* is located at the top to represent the superstructure that requires all the themes, such as "responsiveness" and "accountability," to be in place to effect the needed change. *Responsiveness* and *Accountability* form the main rationale behind decentralization. This is because if people do not respond to the needs of the decentralized system, and those who make decisions are not accountable for the decisions made, such a system might not achieve its set objectives. Hence, responsiveness and accountability are seen to complement each other.

Several countries have adopted educational decentralization because of the benefits that are considered to be derived from the system. For example, Caldwell, Smilanich and Spinks (1988, p. 4) in their article on the Edmonton Public School System noted these benefits: (1) an improved data base for all decisions and increased awareness of the decision-making process; (2) improved staff morale; (3) clarification of the roles and responsibilities of staff and professional associations; (4) improved fiscal management, with redistribution of resources in accordance with system and school priorities; (5) increased understanding of the cycle of management, with an integration of management and instructional planning process; (6) more opportunities for parents and the community to participate and influence; (7) increased responsiveness to school needs on the part of the central service staff; (8) emergence of the principal as a manager, a role which includes that of the instructional leader; (9) the specification of outcomes and the analysis of results in tests and surveys have become catalysts for desired changes; (10) greater attention to staff development; (11) the emergence of new program choices for students; and (12) the emergence of a "why not" environment, despite the difficult economic conditions which have prevailed in recent years.

Deconcentration, delegation or devolution of decision-making power, however, are rarely implemented without incurring problems. Potential benefits from decentralization should also be weighed in the context of a variety of potential problems.

Problems of Decentralization

According to Okulo-Epak (1985), problems under decentralization can be identified in two ways: (1) in terms of the 'gap' between current situations or forecast conditions and some desired objective or policy priority, and (2) in terms of 'missing' or 'felt needs' which are of constant concern and for which help is requested. In general the more specific the difficulty or the aspiration concerned, the more effective the identification of the problem. For example, to state that educational standards are falling is a vague general problem for which causes and solutions might not be easily discernible. To state that lack of textbooks and stationery for primary schools is a problem becomes more specific. In a decentralized state it is necessary to identify problems at the district or local level. Consensus or statements of problems and opportunities should first be sought among (1) the district educational authorities, government as well as non-government agencies, (2) community based groups and (3) political decision-makers.

Problems under decentralization arise, for example, with the need to implement sufficient control procedures, because supervisors and subordinates alike cannot always be counted on to do what is expected of them. The appropriateness of delegation and decentralization is apparently quite dependent upon the needs of the situation, the adequacy of control systems and the attitudes of the individuals involved (Dessler, 1976). Caldwell and Spinks (1988, p. 11) identified potential problem areas related to these questions: (1) What amount of resources should be allocated to each district or school from the central coffers? (2) Is there understandable, reliable and up-to-date information related to school accounts? (3) What categories of income and expenditure should be the subject of school decision, especially those related to maintenance of buildings and debt-servicing?

Bray (1984), Okulo-Epak (1985), Rondinelli (1983) have also identified a number of other major problems brought along with decentralization:

1. Decentralization permits and even encourages regional diversity within the country and may even threaten national cohesion, although this is not always the case.
2. It also makes it more difficult to achieve such national goals as national equalities and the development of a coherent national manpower policy.
3. There is also the tendency for decentralized administrations to be more costly than centralized ones. They may require a large number of administrators and politicians, and frequently the central authorities resist the idea that they should contract their staffing to match an increase in the regions or the districts.
4. Coordination also becomes a major exercise and the result of spreading decision making can be that it takes a much longer time to reach a conclusion.
5. Although decentralization may permit greater local involvement in decision making, it cannot be assumed that everybody is either able or willing to participate. Decentralization may mean that distant autocracies are merely replaced by local ones, and regional planners may find that they are more highly exposed to pressure groups and political interests which do not reflect the opinions of even the majority of the population.

In relation to problems inherent in decentralization, Conyers (1982) made a number of observations. She warned that (1) in spite of the fact that decentralization can be seen as a means of achieving wide range of objectives, it should not be seen as solution to all problems; (2) the extent to which decentralization will achieve any objective depends on the degree and form; (3) most of the objectives which decentralization is intended to achieve such as improvements in the management in rural development cannot be achieved by decentralization alone; (4) decentralization itself creates new problems, the nature and extent of which depend on its degree and form and on factors specific to the country in question.

Current Practices in Four Decentralized Systems

It has been noted that in spite of problems, decentralization has a number of benefits to offer those countries that adopt the system. A few of these systems from both developed and developing countries will be examined briefly. The rationale behind this brief review is that these systems have been in operation and their successes or otherwise have important implications for countries like Ghana which have recently embarked upon serious political and administrative decentralization. With respect to some developed countries Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989, p. 71) describing the approach in general terms stated:

> In most western countries, two apparent contradictory developments are seen to have been occurring over schools. There has been a tendency to push more and more responsibility on to local schools; to encourage people to establish new, independent schools to serve the expressed wishes of a client group; to legislate to all schools which make explicit as well as legitimate the formal participation of parents, students, and the community and educational administration. The tendency has carried labels like decentralization, devolution, privatization and participation. It is a movement away from the centre towards diversified control.

As regards those less developed countries that have adopted decentralization Yannakopulos (1980) noted that the methods for achieving their aims have varied from country to country. She noted that, for example, the countries of the Asian Region have put emphasis on increasing community participation and local support, whereas the Latin American countries have dealt mainly with deconcentration and decentralization aimed at increasing responsibilities of regional and local administrative units.

Four current systems are examined below.

Canada

Canada is a federal nation with ten provinces and two territories. Administrative powers are specifically transferred to the provinces by law (Bray, 1984). In education Leithwood and Begley (1986) have observed that while there has been an increased centralization in most provinces, especially in the areas of curriculum and testing, there is also a trend toward school-based planning and participative decision-making.

Brown (1990) stressed that there is a sustained interest in Canada and the United States in decentralization as a means of school district and school reform. The abiding concern, however, has been how much and what to decentralize. Brown noted that in the U.S. the concept has been tried in Florida, California, Minnesota and Washington. The most advanced plan, however, is to be found in Canada with a sophisticated form of decentralization working in Edmonton Public School District (EPSD) in Alberta (Caldwell, Smilanich & Spinks, 1988, and Brown 1990). They pointed out that in this district there has been a steady evolution over ten years of a highly decentralized approach to the allocation of resources including a recent trial of school-based planning for the use of centralized curriculum and student services. Brown described it as a school-based management. This is a manifestation of decentralization which is a process by which schools within a district are allotted money to purchase supplies, equipment, personnel, utilities, maintenance and perhaps other services according to their own assessment of what is appropriate. These developments have occurred within a framework of centrally determined priorities and a comprehensive system-wide testing program. It is important to note that the primary responsibility for program, policy, financial, and political decisions in education is assumed by the Minister of Education. The Minister also exercises powers and trusts of the position as stipulated in legislation on behalf of the government (Jamha & Worth, 1991). The authors pointed out that in Alberta, the government sets the actual curriculum and provides the major source of funding. There is a close relationship among the minister, school boards, teachers, parents and others. A former Minister of Education in Alberta stated that as a Minister, he wanted to support teachers and strengthen or reinforce the position of school boards as the trustees of the local system. He also wanted to encourage decentralization of decision-making as well as to encourage parents to get more involved in talking about education (Jamha & Worth, 1991, p. 6).

According to Caldwell et al. (1988), in Edmonton the initial focus was on school budget with the practice described as school-site decision-making. School-site decision-making is, however, the current preferred term because of the addition of teacher effectiveness programs and school-by-school approaches to program evaluation. After a three-year trial of school-based budgeting in the late 1970's, a system-wide implementation in the Edmonton Public School System proceeded in about 200 schools. Now there is an institutionalized process wherein the elected school board each year sets the priorities that set the parameters for planning at the school level. These priorities leave a great deal of latitude for the people in the schools. Budget preparation and staff deployment (certificated as well as support) are wholly decentralized to the schools. Accountability in an educational sense is addressed through system-wide testing programs in language, mathematics, science and social studies. This is done at two points in elementary schooling and at one point in secondary schooling. Target levels of performance are set each year. This seems to suggest that target levels are set with respect to student performance on system-wide tests. Surveys of opinions about programs and services are conducted annually among principals, teachers, parents, support staff and staff in central and regional offices. This also seems to suggest that stakeholders opinions are sought about the effectiveness of school-based management processes.

Caldwell and Spinks (1988) pointed out that the Edmonton decentralization approach had become a 'lighthouse' for both Canada and the United States. Conferences were organized by the district in 1983 and 1986 drawing large numbers from both countries. They estimated that the Edmonton Public School system had more than sixty thousand students and with this student population it was probably the largest system to have adopted such a comprehensive approach to school-site management in North America.

Australia

The process of educational decentralization in Australia began in the early 1970's when the Karmel Committee of the Schools Committee Report of 1973 stated inter alia:

> The Committee favors rather less than more centralized control over the operation of schools. Responsibility should be devolved as far as possible upon the people involved in the actual task of schooling in consultation with the parents of the pupils whom they teach, and at senior levels, with the students themselves. Its belief in this grassroots approach to the control of schools reflects a conviction that responsibility will be most effectively discharged where the people entrusted with making decisions are also the people responsible for carrying them out, with an obligation to justify them, and in a position to profit from experience.
> (Hughes, 1973, p. 42).

According to Hughes (1973), the Committee submitted a report which was later accepted for the organization and administration of education in Australian Capital Territory. This resulted in the establishment of an educational authority whose specific charter was to delegate to schools the maximum responsibility for decision-making, including specific powers with respect to curriculum, staffing and finance.

The Australian educational systems for the various states differ significantly in the extent to which they have devolved authority to schools over the past decade (McKenzie & Keeves, 1982). Beare, Caldwell and Milikan, (1989) pointed out that in the central administration of Australian states, a very important trend is now emerging in the form of a new structural shape. The division of pre-primary, primary, secondary, technical and teacher education are now being done away with. Jones, (1977) asserted that perhaps the most extensive moves have been made in Victoria and South Australia. There is a delegation of responsibilities to the principal of a school for a significant number of professional and administrative duties.

Caldwell, Smilanich and Spinks (1988) stated that in Australia, the traditional pattern of centralized control has been sharply reversed in several states and authorities, notably Victoria. In Victoria school councils of parents, teachers, and (for secondary schools) students now have power to determine educational policies and budgets of their schools with guidelines provided by the government. The most recent development in decentralization in Victoria includes another shift from the central to regional offices in a further attempt to provide stronger support and direction to schools in a highly devolved system. Similar shifts in patterns of governance are under consideration in Western Australia.

Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea is a developing country with three million people and 19 provincial governments. Hence Papua New Guinea appears to have one of the most decentralized systems in the world (Bray 1984). In each major sector of government there are twenty Ministers -- one for the national government and one for each provincial government. The provincial governments have considerable autonomy. This suggests a political and administrative decentralization under which decision-making power was divested to the local people.

The Department of Education, according to Bray (1984), began the process of decentralization earlier than other departments and has made more positive efforts to implement the spirit of the Organic Law (a common law enacted in March 1974). Hence he suggested that in Papua New Guinea the Department (Ministry) of Education has taken decentralization more seriously than most other Departments. Early administrative decentralization was established in the structure which unified the educational system in 1970, and so the authorities found it relatively easy to adapt the structure with the setting up of provincial governments. The national government has, however, retained control of teacher training, teachers' conditions of service, most aspects of the curriculum, inspectors and large parts of finance. This provides a significant element of central control within the system.

It is also significant to note that in Papua New Guinea, while some powers were only delegated to provincial governments in 1977, others were devolved and thus ceased to be within the sphere of central government direction. Bray (1985) noted that within education, provincial authorities have charge of community schools, high schools and non-formal education. Several financial changes accompanied decentralization. These changes had major implications for education as well as for other sectors. The legal framework in the country distinguishes between some areas such as defence and foreign policy which are of national importance and should be nationally controlled while others like education should be largely controlled provincially.

Nigeria

Bray (1984) noted that in Nigeria political decentralization emerged in 1967 when the authorities sought to preserve national unity, not by permitting greater autonomy but by breaking it. The chief justification in 1967 for breaking the four regions into 12 states was to divide and rule and thus prevent the domination of specific sub-groups. Education then became essentially the responsibility of state governments with support from the local communities (Igwe, 1988).

There are four levels of education in Nigeria: the pre-primary, primary, secondary and and post-secondary. The last three are taken over by the Government of Nigeria (Oyedeji 1983). The state Ministry of Education takes care of quality control, the Central School Board manages the teachers while the Local Government manages the schools by providing educational facilities and making sure that all the children in their Local Government areas are enrolled at the primary schools.

The Federal Government in its desire to take over elementary education in Nigeria launched a Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme in 1976 (Igwe, 1988). As Oyedeji (1983) pointed out, the UPE was launched to establish equal opportunity for all children of school going age in Nigeria. The Daily Times of September 7, 1976, (cited in Oyedeji, 1983, p. 62) quotes the then Head of State General Olusegun Obasanjo:

> The launching of the UPE scheme today marks the dawn of an era in the history of educational development in this country. It also demonstrates the determination of the Federal Military Government to provide equal opportunities for all children of school going age irrespective of the circumstances of their birth.

In support of the massive Federal intervention, Esen (1976, p. 30) observed: the end-results are so desirable that the Nigerian people have decided not to risk failure by leaving the process to the uncertain policies and precarious finances of the State Governments as in the past. Adaralegbe (1976) in support of this view also noted that the Federal Government enjoys an advantage over the States in connection with existing arrangements over revenue allocation.

In executing the plan, it was suggested that the Federal Government should assume a leadership role in initiating policies, developing planning strategies, producing the programs, and financing them (Adaralegbe, 1976). The real implementation of the program, that is, the setting up of the schools, organizing them, and administering them was to be left to the States which would in turn delegate these functions to the local bodies.

However, noted Igwe (1986), in most parts of Nigeria, the scheme rapidly ran into major problems. Communities found that they were deprived of essential supplies and some areas like Eastern Nigeria resorted to various levies to fill the gap. In January 1982, the annual grant per pupil was withdrawn. Education at present is essentially a responsibility of the State governments with support from the communities, but the Federal Government is still the senior partner in the sense that it controls standards, curriculum,

examinations, employment of teachers, and can even control student admission.

The rationale for looking at these four systems is that their experiences with decentralization contain lessons for Ghana. Decentralization in these systems has assumed different forms depending on a country's particular situation. And, of course, Ghana's circumstances are, to some extent, unique.

Decentralization in Ghana

The main aim of decentralization in Ghana is to improve the delivery of government policies, services and development. It is also aimed at allowing the lower levels as well as grass-roots to participate in deciding their needs and contributing to the development needs (Okulo-Epak, 1989). In Ghana, it has been considered more positive to send decision-making power down the administrative hierarchy, that is, to the grassroots. The government cannot shoulder the responsibility of providing all the resources for education. If the local community is now being called upon to provide a substantial amount of the resources, then there is the need for them (the community) to participate in decision-making in accordance with the saying: "He pays the piper who calls the tune." In doing so it is incumbent on the planners to avoid pitfalls by taking lessons from elsewhere.

Bonsu (1971) has pointed out that popular participation in local administration has a long history in Ghana. Even before British rule, the Chief in a Council was responsible for local government in his administrative area. By custom he had to consult the mass of the people through the chosen elders before arriving at decisions which affected the welfare of the community. This welfare, of course, included the provision of basic education.

The educational system has been centralized for decades with decisions and directives issuing from the national capital to the regions, from the regions to the school districts and from the districts to the schools. According to George (1976), in Ghana's centralized governmental structure, formal education, like most matters, is a Central Government responsibility. The Central Government establishes policy and passes legislation governing the organization and administration of the formal educational system. The Education Act of 1961, for example, "provides for a public school system provided and controlled by the Central Ministry of Education" (George, 1976, p. 63). In the provision of pre-university education, George (1976) noted that there was a complete centralization of administration. For example, the Education Act of 1961 conferred the entire pre-university system on the central Government Minister of education. The Ministry at the national headquarters in Accra was responsible for policy, planning, curriculum research and development, and other matters. It was also responsible for the then nine Regional Education Offices (one in each region). Each Regional Office was headed by a Regional Education Officer. Under each Region was a number of District Education Offices each headed by a District Education Officer. Those in charge of implementation at the lower levels were then expected to implement the Ministry's decisions with fidelity.

Current Trend

In recent years, however, policy makers and administrators, following the current practice in many countries, have seen the need to bring the power to make educational decisions from the top to the lower levels. Under the administrative structure prior to decentralization, George (1976) noted that the responsibilities of the local governments are those assigned to them by the Central government and were limited to contributing funds for all public elementary school and managing them. The Minister of Education himself formulated policies mostly with the approval of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Head of State and first President of the Republic of Ghana. Bretton (1966) cited in Bray (1984, p. 17) pointed to the stifling of innovation in Ghana during the early 1960's when even minor decisions had to await Nkrumah's personal approval. He suggested:

> As a result the learning and correcting capacity of the government and administration of Ghana was submerged in a welter of irrational, contradicting, erratic, highly emotional perspectives concerning events at home and abroad: the learning capacity of Ghana was reduced to the learning capacity of Kwame Nkrumah.

After the Revolution of 24th February 1966, a Commission set up to review the Public Services Structure posed three investigating questions to the people. One of these questions asked whether the then relationship (including control measure) between the Central Government and Local Government was satisfactory. The overwhelming answer was "No." On this basis the Commission concluded that in order to improve efficiency and economy and to provide a machinery of government better designed to accomplish programs for rapid social and economic development, there was a need for the radical decentralization of responsibility for the management of public affairs. The Commission defined decentralization as "the creation of institutions outside the ministries which are locally vested with responsibility for defined functions within the totality of Government and not the delegating of authority by a ministry to an official or officials in a Department or a Region (Daniel, 1971, p. 21). The rationale, as pointed out by Safu (1971), was that under the British system the Local Government pattern made decentralization rather than deconcentration the basic principle of relationship between the Central Government and the Local Authorities. In a decentralized system the local authorities were the real decision-making agencies with a certain amount of autonomy and independence. The general feeling in Ghana then was that a serious devolution of decision-making power was long overdue. A number of factors account for this devolution of power in Ghana. Four of these factors are examined below.

Factors that account for devolution in Ghana

There is a new view of equity in Ghana. Education has been the responsibility of the government for many years. The provision of such education has been free, compulsory and secular, and has been common to all children of school age. However, because of the strong emphasis on the academic component, education seemed to benefit only those who had aptitudes for the purely academic disciplines. Those who had the flare for practical skills, but were not catered for seemed to be regarded as drop-outs. Thus education did not seem to be equitable, as far as the tapping of different talents was concerned. Education, as was given, did not appear to assist in the total development of human and material resources of the country. Now the emphasis, as recommended by the Committee Report of 1973, is on that type of education which will provide for the acquisition of individual skills rather than the general type of education that had been given in the schools for decades. The 1967 Review Committee Report (p. 133) which had similar views had concluded that "the system in a country like Ghana, should aim at instilling in the individual, an appreciation of the need for a change directed towards the development of the human and material resources of the country."

Second, there is the general notion that provision of education as it prevails now has not contributed to the economic well being of the country. There is a general concern that the nation has failed to reap adequate benefits from the huge investments it makes in education (Ghana 1988 & 1989 Annual Estimates). One major direction in improving the situation pertains to initiatives aimed at fostering the acquisition of practical skills by individuals.

Third, decentralization will contribute to the professionalism of teaching. Caldwell, Smilanich and Spinks (1988), writing on decentralized systems elsewhere, pointed out that highly effective schools, or schools that have shown outstanding improvement, have been given a high level of responsibility and authority to make decisions about staffing and the allocation of resources; that within these schools teachers have been empowered in a variety of ways to make a contribution to planning and decision making processes. These observations may hold true for Ghana. Increased autonomy for teachers and fewer bureaucratic controls are also identified by Hughes (1977), Harman (1985) and Johnson (1991) as contributing to the enhancement of the teaching profession.

Finally, decentralization becomes an avenue for providing a choice for the general public as consumers. The public is now showing great interest in the exercise of choice, particularly in relation to the type and quality of education. Education is the "market," and parents and students are the clients or consumers (Caldwell, Smilanich & Spinks, 1988). The school system is being called upon to provide a variety of quality products or services to satisfy the market.

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah remarked on the eve of the country's independence that there is more virtue in self-government, even with danger, than servitude in tranquility (Eghan & Odum, 1989). Moving the locus of decision-making to a position as close as possible to where decisions are to be implemented seems very much in accord to

Dr. Nkrumah's position. It seems contradictory then that administration under Nkrumah himself became so centralized.

Although Hughes (1977, p. 44) was writing on Australian education, a comment he made is relevant to Ghana's situation. He stressed that "as far as possible, local schools should be run by local people, and district decisions made by district representatives, so that instead of uniformity there may be an appropriate diversity reflecting variations in local needs and circumstances, and affording an opportunity for experimentation." Decentralization of administrative power seems an effective means of meeting this need.

When the present government, Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) established District Assemblies in all the 110 political districts in 1987 as a new structure meant to support the decentralization of government machinery, the administration of basic education was also decentralized. The goal of the PNDC Government's policy is to involve as many people as possible in decision-making in matters affecting them (Eghan & Odum, 1989). A national body, Public Administration Restructuring and Decentralization Implementation Committee (PARDIC), was set up to collect and collate views from the public in order to restructure the centralized system. Earlier, the Sowu Committee, also charged with the responsibility of examining the operations of the Civil Service had identified the goals of Ghana's decentralization as follows:

- power should be truly reverted to the people;
- as many as possible should take part in decision-making process that affect their lives;
- there should be mobilization for production and distribution;
- there should be accountability.

Furthermore the policy process was intended to have impact upon the people within the decentralized development system by allocating specific functions to the following:

(1) Town/Area Organizations, (2) District Organizations, (3) Regional Organizations, (4) Ministerial Organizations and (5) National Coordinating Organizations.

As a result of all recommendations, the current structure of Government Machinery and District Development as noted by Aryeetey et al. (1989, p. 44) is made up of (1) Office of the PNDC, (2) Ministerial Organization, (3) Regional Administration, and (4) District Administration.

The Office of the PNDC is the highest political, administrative and legislative body in Ghana. This office is divided in two main parts: the PNDC Secretariat which serves the PNDC members, and the Secretariat of the PNDC Member and Chairman of the Committee of Secretaries which serves as the cabinet secretariat of the government. At this level inputs from the subordinate organs of the government are concretized into policies. They are then communicated and interpreted to other institutions. The necessary institutional procedures are then prepared for their effective implementation and enforcement.

The Ministerial Organization has been divided into planning, monitoring and evaluation organizations. The PARDIC, among its recommendations, stated that all Ministries were to be decentralized with the exception of Defence, Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Justice (Eghan & Odum, 1989). Each Ministry has four main divisions: Policy Planning, Programming and Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation; Research, Statistics and Manpower Development; Information Management and Public Relations; and General Administration.

The restructuring of the Ministerial Organizations was extended to the Regional Administrations. The reason was to give meaning to its role as a buffer between the Central government and the Districts and in promoting development at the local level. Each Regional Administration has two divisions: Administration and Development Programs, each headed by a Director. Under District Administration each district has a District Assembly which is the highest political and administrative body in the district. The objective of creating these assemblies was to extend the restructuring exercise beyond the Regional Administration to the District level. Each Assembly has an Executive Committee with five sub-committees for Economic Development, Social Services, Technical and Infrastructure, Justice and Security, and Finance and Administration. Educational matters peculiar to the District are presented first to the Social Services Sub-Committee which submits them to the Assembly for debate and for a decision to be taken. All educational matters no longer have to be referred to the Region or the national headquarters.

The Local Government Law (PNDC Law 207) of 1988, Section 29 states that twenty-two Departments and Organizations have been decentralized under District Assemblies. These include the Ghana Education Service (GES). Under the decentralized system, the district office of the GES consults the District Assembly for the approval of decisions which it would like to implement. It is significant to note that along with the new policy came a new elementary educational system. The emphasis of the new policy is on a new Junior Secondary School (JSS) system. The JSS is significant for two reasons. It replaced the former Middle School system whose products were no longer found suitable for the country's manpower needs. The JSS was also the stage at which students were taught practical skills which could lay the foundations for future employment. The acquisition of practical skills was a primary objective of the new system. Under the policy people at the local level are expected to contribute to educational decisions affecting their own needs.

Summary

In many organizations, including those responsible for the delivery of educational services, there has been a move toward decentralization. Prior to such decentralization, decisions issued from the centre or the apex of organizations. Experience later indicated that the transfer of the decision-making power from the centre to the lower or the implementation level would enhance developmental efforts. Various forms of decentralization have been noted. These include: political/economic, administrative, horizontal, vertical, selective or parallel decentralization.

At the sub-national level (province, region, district, area or school site), the local community, educational administrators, teachers and parents have been offered opportunity to participate in decision-making since they are assumed to be in the best position to determine their own needs. Proponents of decentralization contend that it is when people participate in decision-making that they become committed to the implementation of development programs.

Decentralization has therefore appeared to outweigh centralization in its advantages to the development efforts. While centralization makes the direction and control from the centre quite easy, decentralization has been found to achieve the more important objective of extending resources to reach all citizens including the disadvantaged and the needy.

With respect to schooling, an important manifestation of decentralization has been school-based management under which power for decision-making has been given to school-based administrators. The apparent support given to decentralization notwithstanding, it has not been effected without its problems. For example, determining what school matters are to be retained at the centre and which ones should be dispersed has proved to be problematic.

If decentralization means participation by those at the "grassroots" levels, then the concept is not new in Ghana. However, Ghana's political development brought in its wake a centralized system of management. This slowed down the development process since the people learned to be looked after by the central government. After decades of administration, many now believe that the centralized processes have not been in the best interest of the country as a whole. Hence the move to decentralization.

CHAPTER IV

EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Recently in Ghana, educational decision-making power has been structurally devolved so as to make the school a basic decision-making unit, a self-managing school, to use the words of Caldwell, Smilanich and Spinks (1988). The American Association of School Administrators (AASA 1988, p. 6) has pointed out that school-based management is based on two beliefs; (1) those most closely affected by decisions ought to play a significant role in making those decisions and (2) educational reforms will be most effective and long lasting when carried out by people who feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the process.

This chapter presents a report of stakeholders' perceptions of the extent of their actual involvement as compared with their preferred involvement in school decision-making under the decentralized system. This analysis provides one measure of the extent to which the two beliefs noted above are enacted in Ghana's educational structure.

The chapter begins with an analysis of the perceptions of the stakeholders as a group, then moves to an analysis of each of the sub-groups of stakeholders (district office administrators, headmasters, teachers, parents and community leaders). This is done so as to highlight the differences that exist among stakeholder groups with respect to their actual and preferred involvement in school decision-making. It is proposed that awareness of the differences in stakeholders' perceptions of their involvement may assist in (1) locating where school management problems exist and (2) directing efforts at solving such problems.

The following are the sub-problems addressed in this chapter:

1. What are the perceptions of stakeholders of the extent of their actual involvement as compared to their preferred involvement in school decision-making under the decentralized system?

2. What are the perceptions of each stakeholder group of the extent of the actual and preferred involvement in school decision-making?

As the major means of investigating these sub-problems, questionnaires were designed so as to allow testing of the following hypothesis:

> There would be no significant differences in stakeholders' perceptions of their actual involvement in school decision making as compared to the extent of their preferred involvement under the decentralized system.

With respect to sub-problems 1 and 2, twenty-two areas of potential involvement were investigated. These are displayed in Table 4. T tests were carried out to assess the significance of the differences between stakeholders' actual and preferred involvement with respect to each of these areas.

Table 4

Areas of Potential Involvement in Decision-Making

1. Allocation of School Funds
2. Design of Courses
3. Classroom Instruction
4. Appointment of Principals
5. Appointment of Teachers
6. Principal/Teacher Salaries
7. Quality of Teaching Staff
8. Staff Discipline
9. In-service Training
10. Library Books
11. Textbook/Stationery
12. Examination/Testing
13. Student Promotion
14. Size of Classes
15. Admission of Students
16. Student Discipline
17. Provision/Renovation of School Building
18. Provision of Furniture
19. Extra-curricular Activities
20. School Supplies
21. Equipment for Science, Sports, Music, etc .
22. Audio-visual Aids: Radio, TV, etc.

Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Extent of Their Involvement in School Decision-Making

The American Association of School Administrators (1988, p. 13) has contended that school-based management ought to involve the entire school community in establishing school objectives, developing programs to meet those objectives, implementing the programs and monitoring program success. The findings with respect to the perceptions of 236 stakeholders in Ghana who were surveyed about the extent to which they are actually involved in school decision-making and the extent of their preferred involvement are provided here in a summary form in Table 5.

In Table 5, data pertaining to the actual and preferred extent of involvement of all stakeholders as a group are presented. On the questionnaire, involvement was measured on a four-point Likert-type scale: (1) Almost None, (2) Very Little, (3) A Fair Amount, and (4) A Great Deal. A fifth point, "Don't know" was indicated on the scale for respondents who were undecided on an item. In Table 5, the category "don't know" includes the "no response" as well. For each of these categories, frequencies and percentages of responses are presented first for actual involvement (A), then for preferred involvement (P).

A close examination of Table 5 shows remarkable differences between the extent to which stakeholders are actually involved in school decision-making under the new educational system and the extent of involvement they would prefer. For the very first item, allocation of school funds, for example, 89 respondents (37.7 %) said they had almost no involvement, and 86 respondents (36.4 %) said their actual involvement was very little. Only 29 respondents (12.3 %) said they had a fair amount of involvement and 10 respondents (4.2 %) said they had a great deal of involvement. Compared with stakeholders' preferred involvement, 112 respondents (47.5 %) wanted a fair amount of involvement while 103 respondents (43.6 %) preferred a great deal of involvement.

Table 5

Stakeholders' Responses on Actual and Preferred Involvement in School Decision Making

(N = 236)

			Almost None		Very Little		A Fair Amount		A Great Deal		Don't Know	
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Allocation of Funds	A	89	37.7	86	36.4	29	12.3	10	4.2	22	9.4
		P	4	1.7	5	2.1	112	47.5	103	43.6	12	5.1
2.	Design of Courses	A	70	29.7	46	19.5	56	23.7	47	19.9	17	7.2
		P	5	2.1	16.	6.8	91	38.6	109	46.2	15	6.3
3.	Classroom Instruction	A	40	16.9	55	23.3	81	34.3	52	22.0	8	3.4
		P	7	3.0	10	4.2	72	30.5	135	57.2	12	5.1
4.	Appointment of Principals	A	69	29.2	39	16.5	66	28.0	20	8.5	42	17.8
		P	16	6.8	17	7.2	119	50.4	63	26.7	21	8.9
5.	Appointment of Teachers	A	61	25.8	75	31.8	61	25.8	25	10.6	14	5.9
		P	12	5.1	13	5.5	60	25.4	135	57.7	16	6.9
6.	Principal/Teacher Salaries	A	74	31.4	91	38.6	33	14.0	7	3.0	31	13.1
		P	14	5.9	10	4.4	74	31.4	124	52.5	14	5.9
7.	Quality of Teaching Staff	A	52	22.0	66	28.0	88	37.3	23	9.7	7	2.9
		P	9	3.8	8	3.4	73	30.9	136	57.6	10	4.2
8.	Staff Discipline	A	34	14.4	57	24.2	93	39.4	46	19.4	6	2.5
		P	8	3.4	4	1.7	66	28.0	144	61.0	14	5.9
9.	In-service Training	A	58	24.6	70	29.7	64	27.1	35	14.8	9	3.8
		P	13	5.5	7	3.0	81	34.3	120	50.8	15	6.4
10.	Library Books	A	102	43.2	102	43.2	14	5.9	9	3.8	9	3.8
		P	10	4.2	10	4.2	80	33.9	124	52.5	12	5.1
11.	Textbooks/Stationery	A	62	26.3	101	42.8	52	22.0	17	7.2	4	1.7
		P	4	1.7	9	3.8	66	28.0	143	60.0	14	5.9

			Almost None		Very Little		A Fair Amount		A Great Deal		Don't Know	
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
12.	Exams/Testing	A	47	19.9	44	18.6	91	38.6	45	19.1	9	3.8
		P	15	6.4	14	5.9	94	39.8	101	44.1	9	3.8
13.	Student Promotion	A	56	23.7	29	12.3	75	31.8	63	26.7	13	5.8
		P	17	7.2	14	5.9	111	47.0	77	32.6	17	7.2
14.	Size of Classes	A	51	21.6	45	19.1	80	33.9	49	20.8	11	4.6
		P	10	4.2	20	8.5	114	48.3	75	31.8	17	7.2
15.	Admission of Students	A	48	20.3	48	20.3	69	29.2	50	21.2	21	8.9
		P	13	5.5	16	6.8	108	45.8	86	36.4	13	5.5
16.	Student Discipline	A	35	14.8	97	41.1	60	25.4	37	15.7	7	2.9
		P	7	3.0	4	1.7	61	25.8	151	64.0	13	5.5
17.	Provision/Renovation	A	102	43.2	84	35.6	25	10.6	13	5.5	12	5.1
	School Building	P	7	3.0	8	3.4	95	40.3	115	48.7	11	4.7
18.	Provision of Furniture	A	87	36.9	91	38.6	30	12.7	20	8.5	8	1.3
		P	7	3.0	7	3.0	75	31.8	137	58.1	10	4.2
19.	Extra-curricular	A	42	17.8	65	27.5	68	28.8	51	21.6	10	4.2
	Activities	P	7	3.0	24	10.2	122	51.7	71	30.1	12	5.1
20.	School Supplies	A	72	30.5	110	46.6	34	14.4	11	4.7	9	3.8
		P	11	4.7	10	4.2	83	35.2	123	52.1	9	3.8
21.	Equipment for Science,	A	89	37.7	93	39.4	29	12.3	5	2.1	20	8.4
	Sports, Music, etc.	P	7	3.0	16	6.8	81	34.3	118	50.0	14	5.9
22.	Audio-visual Aids:	A	133	56.4	64	27.1	11	4.7	5	2.2	23	9.8
	Radio,TV, etc.	P	4	1.7	13	5.5	111	47.0	92	39.0	16	6.9

*A : Actual *P: Preferred

Only 4 persons (1.7 %) preferred almost no involvement while 5 persons (2.1 %) wanted very little involvement. For most items, then, respondents felt that they actually had almost no or very little involvement in taking school decisions, but that they would prefer a fair amount or a great deal of involvement. Overall the level of involvement did not seem to be extensive.

However, in matters such as quality of teaching staff (item 7), and staff discipline (item 8), student promotion (item 13), a substantial number of respondents, 88 for item 7, (37.3 %), 93 for item 8 (39.4 %), 75 for item 13 (31.8%) stated that they actually had a fair amount or a great deal of involvement. It seems that the stakeholders perceived there to be two general categories of areas for potential involvement in decision-making: (1) those related to educational resources such as allocation of school funds (item 1), or library books (item 10) and (2) those related to matters more closely tied to the educational processes in which the schools were engaged, such as quality of teaching staff and student promotion. Moreover, stakeholders had and preferred different level of involvement depending upon the category of a particular item. This theme was played out somewhat differently for each of the sub-groups among the stakeholders. This is examined carefully as the chapter unfolds.

Discrepancies in Stakeholders' Actual and Preferred Involvement

The analysis now moves to an examination of the extent to which stakeholders differed in their perceptions of the extent of their actual involvement as opposed to their preferred involvement. In the tables and the discussions which follow, the measure of this is taken to be the difference between the means of actual and preferred involvement, and is referred to as the discrepancy for any particular item. The tables display the number of responses (N) for each item. These numbers vary because data were included only in the cases where respondents indicated both actual and preferred ratings between 1 (almost none) and 4 (a great deal). This is because in the cases where respondents indicated "don't know" a discrepancy could not be calculated.

In Table 6, items are ranked according to these discrepancies. In the ranking, item 1, Audio-visual aids, with an *actual* mean of 1.43 and a *preferred* mean of 3.34 had the largest discrepancy (1.92), while the last item, student promotion, with an actual mean of 2.60 and a *preferred* mean of 3.13, had the least discrepancy (0.53). All differences are significant at .01 level.

As the ranking illustrates, generally, items related to resources (such as audio-visual aids and library books) have greater discrepancies than do the items (such as size of classes and student promotion) related to the actual process or pedagogy of education. This may indicate that generally, stakeholders were more comfortable with their level of involvement in decisions pertaining to pedagogical matters.

However, *preferred* scores were consistently higher than the *actual* scores for all decision items. Mean scores for preferred involvement ranged from 3.62 for student discipline to 3.06 for appointment of principal. At the same time, mean scores for actual involvement ranged from 2.60 for student promotion to 1.43 for audio-visual aids. Also worth noting is that the mean scores for the actual involvement increased from 1.43 for the first item to 2.60 for the last item, thus contributing to the items nearer the bottom of the listing having relatively small discrepancies. Even so, it is likely that with respect to the decision areas with small discrepancies, stakeholders felt less discomfort with their extent of involvement than they did with their extent of preferred involvement in the decision areas.

Analysis using a quadrant assessment model (QAM) allows a more "finegrained" view of the inferences noted above. Seger, Caldwell, Magnan and Maynes (1980, p. 21) described this model for their analysis as follows, "In a QAM

Table 6

Stakeholders' Responses on Actual and Preferred Extent of Involvement in School Decision Making
(N = 236)

			Actual		Preferred			
		N	M	SD	M	SD	Diff.	t-Value*
1.	Audio-visual Aids	202	1.43	0.63	3.34	0.63	1.92	29.13
2.	Library Books	217	1.67	0.73	3.42	0.76	1.76	26.61
3.	Equipment for Science, etc.	208	1.74	0.74	3.41	0.74	1.68	24.62
4.	Provision/Renovation of Schools	216	1.75	0.84	3.41	0.70	1.66	20.95
5.	Provision of Furniture	219	1.90	0.91	3.52	0.67	1.63	19.76
6.	Allocation of Funds	205	1.79	0.82	3.40	0.61	1.60	23.75
7.	Principal/Teacher Salaries	198	1.83	0.77	3.36	0.85	1.53	22.25
8.	Textbooks/Stationery	219	2.05	0.83	3.57	0.66	1.52	25.43
9.	School Supplies	218	1.90	0.79	3.41	0.78	1.51	23.25
10.	Appointment of Teachers	208	2.16	0.93	3.46	0.84	1.29	19.83
11.	Student Discipline	218	2.38	0.91	3.62	0.68	1.22	17.08
12.	Quality of Teaching Staff	220	2.31	0.93	3.51	0.73	1.19	19.07
13.	In-service Training	213	2.31	1.00	3.41	0.79	1.11	15.06
14.	Design of Courses	206	2.30	1.13	3.37	0.69	1.07	13.93
15.	Staff Discipline	217	2.60	0.95	3.58	0.68	0.98	14.23
16.	Appointment of Principal	182	2.16	1.02	3.06	0.81	0.90	11.17
17.	Classroom Instruction	217	2.61	1.01	3.51	0.71	0.89	13.67
18.	Examination/Testing	218	2.57	1.02	3.26	0.86	0.69	9.85
19.	Admission of Students	204	2.53	1.08	3.19	0.80	0.66	8.93
20.	Size of Classes	211	2.55	1.07	3.18	0.75	0.64	7.33
21.	Extra-curricular Activities	216	2.54	1.03	3.14	0.71	0.61	7.55
22.	Student Promotion	208	2.60	1.14	3.13	0.84	0.53	6.04

* All differences were significant at .01 level

analysis, tasks are organized into four groups on the basis of mean ratings on a Likert-type scale with raw scores converted to T-scores."

For the purposes of this study, the four groups are as follows:(1) Low Actual - High Preferred -- items which are rated low (below the mean) in actual involvement and high (above the mean) in preferred involvement; (2) High Actual - High Preferred -- items rated high in actual involvement and high in preferred involvement; (3) High Actual - Low Preferred -- items which are rated high in actual involvement and low in preferred involvement; and (4) Low Actual - Low Preferred -- items which are rated low in actual involvement and low in preferred involvement. The four groups are then displayed in a quadrant form.

Underpinning the application of this model to data analysis in this study is an assumption that, regardless of the mean value on a scale of actual or preferred involvement, it is meaningful to assign the items as high or low depending upon whether their values are higher or lower than the mean. This assumption may seem somewhat tenuous. It results, for example, in items for which the mean actual rating by community leaders was over 1.8 being considered high, while the mean preferred rating for headmasters must be above 3.6 to be considered high. The correctness of this assumption rests on whether it is reasonable to assign substantive meaning to relative differences on these scales. Readers are advised to bear this assumption in mind when interpreting any of the QAM analyses provided in this chapter.

It is also important to bear in mind the first major point made in this chapter; that with the exception of only a few items, stakeholders perceived that they had relatively little involvement and they preferred to have considerable involvement. While this holds for almost all of the items, the QAM identifies those items for which the gap may be most important or substantial. This highlights a second assumption; that the items in Quadrant 1 of the QAM, those with low actual involvement and high preferred involvement are key items. *The contention is that it is with respect to these*

Table 7

Stakeholders' Actual and Preferred Involvement

Mean: Actual: 2.17 Preferred: 3.38

QUADRANT 1 *Low Actual- High Preferred* Library Books Equipment for Science, etc. Provision/Renovation of Schools Provision of furniture Allocation of Funds School Supplies Appointment of Teachers	QUADRANT 2 *High Actual - High Preferred* Student Discipline Quality of Teaching Staff In-service Training Staff Discipline Textbooks/Stationery Classroom Instruction
QUADRANT 4 *Low Actual - Low Preferred* Audio-visual Aids Principal/Teacher Salaries Appointment of Principal	QUADRANT 3 *High Actual - Low Preferred* Design of Courses Examination/Testing Admission of Students Size of Classes Extra-curricular activities Student Promotion

items that particular stakeholder groups feel the greatest gap between their need to be involved and their actual involvement. The items thus identified may be the ones to which educational decision makers in Ghana should first attend. Others, of course, may also require attention.

The QAM analysis for all stakeholders, locates in quadrant 1, decision areas related to library books, equipment for science, sports, music, etc., provision/renovation of schools, provision of furniture, textbooks/stationery, school supplies, and appointment of teachers (see Table 7). Note that with the exception of "appointment of teachers," these are all items in the resources category. This suggests that overall, the stakeholders perceived that, even in the decentralized system, they have very little control over decisions related to financial resources and the things that financial resources can purchase. And these are areas in which they desire the greatest amount of involvement.

While inferences related to the analysis presented above may be useful to those guiding the overall implementation of decentralized decision-making in Ghana, the analysis of the responses of the various groups may be useful in helping decision-makers "target" their initiatives. As is illustrated below, different sub-groups seem to have somewhat different priorities with respect to the decision areas in which they perceive the greatest need for increased involvement.

District Office Administrators' Actual and Preferred Involvement

There was a 100% return rate from the 26 district office administrators surveyed. The number of responses for the decision items, however, ranged from 19 to 24 indicating that for some items, a few respondents (between 2 and 7) did not indicate their stand.

The items in Table 8 are ranked according to the size of the discrepancy. The largest discrepancy related to library books with an actual involvement mean of 1.46 and a preferred mean of 3.33. The lowest discrepancy related to student promotion

Table 8

District Office Administrators' Responses on Actual and Preferred Extent of Involvement in School Decision Making

			Actual		Preferred			
		N	M	SD	M	SD	Diff.	t-Value*
1.	Library Books	24	1.46	0.78	3.33	0.48	1.88	13.51
2.	Audio-visual Aids	21	1.43	0.51	3.29	0.46	1.86	13.00
3.	Textbooks/Stationery	22	2.09	0.92	3.68	0.48	1.60	11.20
4.	Provision/Renovation of Schools	24	1.83	0.87	3.29	0.55	1.46	7.00
5.	Equipment for Science, etc.	21	1.90	0.77	3.33	0.58	1.43	8.77
6.	Allocation of Funds	24	2.08	0.88	3.50	0.51	1.42	7.88
7.	Principal/Teacher Salaries	22	1.86	0.94	3.14	0.77	1.27	5.78
8.	School Supplies	23	2.00	0.95	3.26	0.69	1.26	7.47
9.	Quality of Teaching Staff	24	2.33	0.87	3.58	0.50	1.25	9.06
10.	Appointment of Teachers	23	2.26	1.10	3.43	0.59	1.17	9.75
11.	Classroom Instruction	24	2.63	1.01	3.71	0.55	1.08	5.72
12.	Provision of Furniture	24	2.17	1.00	3.25	0.61	1.08	4.03
13.	Student Discipline	24	2.63	0.71	3.67	0.48	1.04	6.80
14.	Size of Classes	21	2.24	1.18	3.24	0.77	1.00	4.18
15.	Examinations/Testing	23	2.34	0.94	3.35	0.89	1.00	3.73
16.	Admission of Students	23	2.35	1.52	3.30	0.70	0.96	5.56
17.	Appointment of Principal	19	2.26	1.15	3.21	0.54	0.95	4.02
18.	In-service Training	24	2.67	0.96	3.58	0.72	0.92	5.79
19.	Design of Courses	22	2.59	1.10	3.50	0.51	0.91	4.18
20.	Extra-curricular Activities	24	2.46	1.06	3.33	0.64	0.88	3.98
21.	Staff Discipline	24	2.79	0.78	3.63	0.50	0.83	5.36
22.	Student Promotion	22	2.36	1.22	3.14	0.18	0.77	3.73

*All differences were sigificant at .01 level with an actual involvement mean of 2.36 and a preferred mean of 3.14. All differences were significant at .01 level. A pattern similar to that noted with respect to Table 6 is also apparent here. The items with the largest discrepancies relate to resources, (for example, library books and audio-visual aids), while those with the smallest discrepancies relate to educational processes (for example, student promotion and design of courses. It would seem that district office administrators are far less concerned with increasing their involvement in issues related to educational processes than they are with increasing their involvement with issues related to resources.

The QAM analysis for district office administrators' responses locate only two items in quadrant 1. These are textbooks and allocation of funds (see Table 9). This means that for district office administrators, there were only two decision items for which the gaps between actual and preferred involvement were greatest. That these discrepancies are identified as those which district office administrators may be most concerned about increasing their involvement may reflect the nature of the responsibilities of district administrators. They are charged with the responsibility of supervising and monitoring basic education to ensure effective and efficient delivery of education service. Both textbooks and general allocation of resources are major issues that have traditionally been the responsibility of district administrators. Whether or not these inferences are valid, it would seem that these are two areas with respect to which district administrators have serious concern about their level of involvement. Under the decentralized system, they perceive that they have little involvement, but they perceive that they ought to have considerable involvement.

Headmasters' Actual and Preferred Involvement

The findings from the responses of headmasters are presented in Table 10. Forty-five out of fifty questionnaires sent to headmasters were returned. This number

Table 9

District Office Administrators' Actual and Preferred Involvement

Mean: Actual: 2.21 Preferred: 3.40

QUADRANT 1 *Low Actual- High Preferred* Textbooks/Stationery Allocation of Funds	QUADRANT 2 *High Actual - High Preferred* Quality of Teaching Staff Appointment of Teachers Classroom Instruction Student Discipline In-service Training Design of Courses Staff Discipline
QUADRANT 4 *Low Actual - Low Preferred* Library Books Audio-visual Aids Provision/Renovation of Schools Equipment for Science, etc. Principal/Teacher Salaries School Supplies Provision of Furniture	QUADRANT 3 *High Actual - Low Preferred* Size of Classes Examination/Testing Admission of Students Appointment of Principal Extra-curricular Activities Student Promotion

Table 10

Headmasters' Responses on Actual and Preferred Extent of Involvement in School Decision Making

			Actual		Preferred			
		N	M	SD	M	SD	Diff.	t-Value*
1.	Audio-visual Aids	40	1.40	0.63	3.50	0.64	2.10	12.02*
2.	Provision of Furniture	41	1.78	0.82	3.73	0.59	1.95	11.19*
3.	Provision/Renovation of Schools	41	1.73	0.90	3.56	0.67	1.83	9.58*
4.	Equipment for Science, etc.	42	1.98	0.75	3.70	0.60	1.71	10.66*
5.	School Supplies	42	2.10	0.76	3.76	0.43	1.67	13.23*
6.	Allocation of Funds	41	1.85	0.73	3.46	0.51	1.61	12.37*
7.	Library Books	42	2.00	0.66	3.60	0.59	1.60	11.01*
8.	Principal/Teacher Salaries	38	2.03	0.64	3.58	0.55	1.55	12.04*
9.	Textbooks/Stationery	42	2.48	0.71	3.81	0.46	1.33	10.22*
10.	Appointment of Teachers	41	2.46	0.71	3.78	0.48	1.32	9.03*
11.	Quality of Teaching Staff	42	2.48	0.71	3.69	0.47	1.21	10.49*
12.	Appointment of Principal	36	2.39	0.93	3.33	0.54	0.94	6.86*
13.	In-service Training	41	2.68	0.76	3.51	0.68	0.83	5.07*
14.	Staff Discipline	41	3.02	0.61	3.80	0.46	0.78	6.89*
15.	Student Discipline	41	2.83	0.80	3.61	0.74	0.78	4.71*
16.	Design of Courses	39	2.77	0.99	3.54	0.68	0.77	4.63*
17.	Examination/Testing	40	2.88	0.69	3.45	0.64	0.58	4.31*
18.	Classroom Instruction	42	3.26	0.63	3.76	0.43	0.50	4.58*
19.	Size of Classes	42	3.00	0.82	3.23	0.69	0.24	1.35
20.	Student Promotion	41	3.07	0.85	3.32	0.76	0.24	1.53
21.	Admission of Students	41	3.10	0.80	3.29	0.64	0.20	1.35
22.	Extra-curricular Activities	40	3.05	0.85	3.25	0.71	0.20	1.14

*Differences were significant at .01 level

Table 11

Headmasters' Actual and Preferred Involvement

Mean: Actual: 2.47 Preferred: 3.50

QUADRANT 1 *Low Actual- High Preferred* Provision of furniture Provision/Renovation of Schools Equipment for Science, etc. School Supplies Library Books Principal/Teacher Salaries Appointment of Teachers	QUADRANT 2 *High Actual - High Preferred* Textbooks/Stationery Quality of Teaching Staff Staff Discipline Student Discipline Classroom Instruction
QUADRANT 4 *Low Actual - Low Preferred* Audio-visual Aids Allocation of Funds Appointment of Principal	QUADRANT 3 *High Actual - Low Preferred* In-service/Training Design of Courses Examination/Testing Size of Classes Student Promotion Admission of Students Extra-curricular activities

represented a 90% return rate. However, the number of responses for individual decision items ranged from 36 to 42. This indicated that between three and nine respondents did not indicate their stand for certain items.

Discrepancies for items 1 through 18 were significant at the .01 level. The discrepancies for items 19 through 22 were not significant.

As was the case with respect to district office-based administrators, the data in Table 10 suggest that there were greater gaps in the extent which headmasters were involved and the extent to which they preferred to be involved with decision making in matters related to educational resources than with the actual process of education. Indeed, with headmasters, this distinction is even more clear. In the ranked responses, largest discrepancies were found with decision items as audio-visual aids (2.10), provision of furniture (1.95) and provision and renovation of school (1.83). Decision items like staff discipline, classroom instruction, size of classes, student admission, student promotion and extra-curricular activities had actual means of over 3.0 each. When these are compared with their preferred means it is found that these items have very small discrepancies, for example, student admission and extra-curricular activities have mean discrepancies of only .20 each. This suggests that there are a range of school-based educational issues with which headmasters are relatively content with their current levels of involvement in decision-making.

The QAM analysis locates (Table 11) seven decision items in quadrant 1: provision of furniture, equipment for science, school supplies, library books, appointment of teachers, provision/renovation of school, and principal/teacher salaries. These decision items pertain to resources and teaching personnel (see Table 11). Perhaps this reflects two notions. First, headmasters would wish to operate the school not simply with teaching staff, but a high quality staff. Therefore, they would be pleased to be involved in the appointment of such teachers. Second, a high quality staff cannot give of their best without resources. Hence they would probably feel most comfortable if they had extensive involvement in these decision issues. At the time of data collection, however, they did not seem to perceive that they had a sufficient level of involvement in these areas.

Teachers' Actual and Preferred Involvement

A total of 134 questionnaires were sent to teachers. Eighty-four completed questionnaires were returned which represented a 63% return rate. As some teachers did not rate particular items, the number of responses (N) for the items range from 73 to 81. Analyses of these questionnaire data are displayed in Table 12. All differences were significant at the .01 level.

The pattern is much like that observed in the analysis of the headmasters' data. The greatest discrepancies were found with respect to resource related items and the least discrepancies were found with respect to educational-process-related items.

However, the QAM identifies those areas which would seem to require the first attention of policy and decision makers. The QAM analysis located six items in Quadrant 1 (see Table 13). Five of these are resource-related: library books, equipment for science, etc., provision of furniture, school supplies and textbooks/stationery. In this quadrant, the non-resource item is "principal/teacher salaries." Although teachers prefer greater involvement in all issues, these are issues they would likely wish to consider first. Teachers would seem to desire greater control over the resources they need for their instruction and over their remuneration.

Parents' Actual and Preferred Involvement

The analysis of the questionnaire data gathered from parents is presented in Table 14. Sixty questionnaires were sent to parents. Fifty-four completed questionnaires, representing a 90% return rate, were received. As some parents chose not to respond to some items, total responses for individual decision items ranged from 37 to 51. All discrepancies were significant at .01 level.

Table 12

Teachers' Responses on Actual and Preferred Extent of Involvement in School Decision Making

			Actual		Preferred			
		N	M	SD	M	SD	Diff.	t-Value*
1.	Audio-visual Aids	77	1.43	0.68	3.40	0.59	1.97	19.19
2.	Library Books	79	1.72	0.77	3.59	0.61	1.87	16.57
3.	Equipment for Science, etc.	76	1.67	0.72	3.53	0.68	1.86	17.32
4.	Provision of Furniture	79	1.84	0.97	3.61	0.65	1.77	12.92.
5.	Allocation of Funds	73	1.68	0.74	3.41	0.66	1.73	16.09
6.	Provision/Renovation of Schools	77	1.70	0.90	3.39	0.75	1.69	12.18
7.	Principal/Teacher Salaries	73	1.85	0.81	3.52	0.71	1.67	13.37
8.	School Supplies	80	1.96	0.86	3.50	0.71	1.54	12.61
9.	Textbooks/Stationery	81	2.14	0.85	3.60	0.61	1.46	13.81
10.	Appointment of Teachers	75	2.28	1.03	3.49	0.78	1.21	10.47
11.	Design of Courses	75	2.21	1.12	3.36	0.69	1.15	8.66
12.	Student Discipline	80	2.51	0.97	3.65	0.64	1.14	10.02
13.	In-service Training	79	2.35	1.01	3.48	0.66	1.13	8.90
14.	Quality of Teaching Staff	79	2.51	1.02	3.48	0.75	0.97	8.07
15.	Appointment of Principal	65	2.11	0.99	3.06	0.77	0.95	6.68
16.	Classroom Instruction	80	2.94	0.86	3.68	0.47	0.74	7.60
17.	Staff Discipline	80	2.85	0.96	3.49	0.76	0.64	5.45
18.	Admission of Students	76	2.66	1.08	3.29	0.78	0.63	5.09
19.	Size of Classes	79	2.59	1.09	3.16	0.72	0.57	3.68
20.	Student Promotion	75	2.72	1.09	3.24	0.71	0.52	3.22
21.	Examination/Testing	81	2.85	0.98	3.36	0.71	0.51	4.07
22.	Extra-curricular Activities	80	2.75	0.95	3.18	0.69	0.43	3.57

*All differences were significant at .01 level

Table 13

Teachers' Actual and Preferred Involvement

Mean: Actual: 2.24 Preferred: 3.43

QUADRANT 1 *Low Actual- High Preferred* Library Books Equipment for Science, etc Provision of Furniture Principal/Teacher Salaries School Supplies Textbooks/Stationery	QUADRANT 2 *High Actual - High Preferred* Appointment of Teachers Student Discipline In-service Training Quality of Teaching Staff Classroom Instruction Staff Discipline
QUADRANT 4 *Low Actual - Low Preferred* Audio-visual Aids Provision/Renovation of Schools Design of Courses Appointment of Principal Allocation of Funds	QUADRANT 3 *High Actual - Low Preferred* Admission of Students Size of Classes Student Promotion Examination/Testing Extra-curricular activities

Similar to other stakeholder groups, parents responses showed larger involvement discrepancies on issues related to educational resources than pedagogy of education. The largest mean discrepancy (1.64) related to textbooks and stationery while the least mean discrepancy (0.63) related to student promotion. Compared to teachers' responses, the means for parents' responses for actual and preferred involvement were lower than those of teachers. For teachers, the means of actual involvement in many of the pedagogical issues were higher than 2.5, while the means for parents never reached 2.5. Similarly, the means for teachers' preferred involvement exceeded 3.5 while those of parents never reached 3.5. In fact, for parents the largest mean was 3.48 which related to staff discipline, an issue for which parents indicated their largest preferred involvement. It would seem that while parents do have some involvement in school decision-making, they have considerably less than teachers, and, what is more, they seem to see this as appropriate.

While the above findings enable us to understand the perceptions of parents in relation to other stakeholders, the QAM analysis enables us to identify where parents' preferences for involvement may be greatest. For parents, five items are located in quadrant 1 (see Table 15). Three of these are resource related: textbooks/stationery, provision/renovation of schools, and allocation of funds. But there are also items pertaining to teacher and student discipline. This is probably because apart from parents' high concern for resources with which the children acquire education, they also perceive that they have an important role to play with respect to student discipline, but do not feel that they are currently given adequate opportunity to fulfill that role. Quadrant 2 indicates, however, that parents want and have high involvement with staff discipline.

Table 14

Parents' Responses on Actual and Preferred Extent of Involvement in School Decision Making

			Actual		Preferred			
		N	M	SD	M	SD	Diff.	t-Value*
1.	Textbooks/Stationery	50	1.64	0.63	3.28	0.70	1.64	16.07*
2.	Library Books	50	1.48	0.65	3.10	0.93	1.62	11.60*
3.	Student Discipline	49	1.86	0.76	3.41	0.84	1.55	10.22
4.	Audio-visual Aids	43	1.59	0.67	2.98	0.67	1.49	11.05
5.	Staff Discipline	48	2.02	0.86	3.48	0.74	1.46	10.96
6.	Provision/Renovation of Schools	49	1.84	0.83	3.29	0.74	1.45	8.51
7.	Allocation of Funds	44	1.80	0.98	3.18	0.66	1.39	8.03
8.	Principal/Teacher Salaries	43	1.67	0.72	3.05	1.02	1.37	11.43
9.	Equipment for Science, etc.	47	1.66	0.79	3.02	0.90	1.36	8.71
10.	School Supplies	50	1.76	0.63	3.10	0.95	1.34	10.87
11.	Appointment of Teachers	45	1.82	0.75	3.16	1.07	1.33	10.83
12.	Provision of Furniture	51	2.06	0.86	3.37	0.77	1.31	7.56
13.	Quality of Teaching Staff	50	2.04	0.93	3.32	0.94	1.28	10.85
14.	Design of Courses	45	2.00	1.11	3.22	0.74	1.22	7.87
15.	In-service Training	46	1.94	1.00	3.09	1.05	1.55	7.42
16.	Classroom Instruction	47	1.85	0.86	2.98	0.92	1.13	7.97
17.	Admission of Students	44	2.05	0.99	2.98	0.85	0.93	6.06
18.	Examination/Testing	51	2.14	1.10	3.00	1.04	0.86	5.93
19.	Extra-curricular Activities	49	2.04	1.02	2.86	0.71	0.82	4.82
20.	Size of Classes	46	2.28	1.07	3.02	0.83	0.74	4.24
21.	Appointment of Principal	37	2.03	1.07	2.70	0.97	0.68	4.35
22.	Student Promotion	46	2.30	1.21	2.93	0.95	0.63	3.62

* All differences were significant at the .01 level

Table 15

Parents' Actual and Preferred Involvement

Mean: Actual: 1.90 Preferred: 3.11

QUADRANT 1 *Low Actual- High Preferred* Textbooks/Stationery Student Discipline Provision/Renovation of Schools Allocation of Funds Appointment of Teachers	QUADRANT 2 *High Actual - High Preferred* Staff Discipline Provision of Furniture Quality of Teaching Staff Design of Courses
QUADRANT 4 *Low Actual - Low Preferred* Library Books Audio-visual Aids Principal/Teacher Salaries Equipment for Science, etc. School Supplies Classroom Instruction	QUADRANT 3 *High Actual - Low Preferred* In-service Training Admission of Students Examination/Testing Extra-curricular activities Size of Classes Appointment of Principal Student Promotion

Community Leaders' Actual and Preferred Involvement

The analysis of the questionnaire data gathered from community leaders is presented in Table 16. Thirty questionnaires were sent to various community leaders throughout the district. Twenty-six completed questionnaires, representing an 87% return rate were received. As some community leaders chose not to respond to some items, total responses for individual decision items ranged from 19 to 24. All discrepancies were significant at .01 level.

In the overall responses, community leaders, like all other stakeholder groups, indicated that they were actually involved in school decision making but they would also prefer more involvement. Also like other stakeholder groups, the largest discrepancies were found with respect to educational resource items and the smallest related to pedagogy of education. The largest mean discrepancy (2.5) related to audio-visual aids while the least mean discrepancy (0.74) related to student promotion.

Compared to parents' preferred involvement, the means for community leaders were generally higher which would seem to indicate that community leaders preferred more involvement than parents. The level of actual involvement of community leaders with respect to pedagogical issues were higher than with respect to resource-related issues. This suggests that as community leaders, they are relatively satisfied with their current extent of involvement in pedagogic issues. However, they perceive that they have a crucial role to play in the provision of resources. They would therefore prefer a higher involvement in decision-making affecting educational resources.

The QAM analysis locates 7 items in quadrant 1 (see Table 17). These are audio-visual aids, provision/renovation of schools, equipment for science, allocation of funds, provision of furniture, textbooks/stationery and in-service training.

Table 16

Community Leaders' Responses on Actual and Preferred Extent of Involvement in School Decision Making

			Actual		Preferred			
		N	M	SD	M	SD	Diff.	t-Value*
1.	Audio-visual Aids	20	1.35	0.49	3.60	0.50	2.25	12.80
2.	Provision/Renovation of School	24	1.71	0.62	3.63	0.58	1.92	9.64
3.	Equipment for Science, etc.	21	1.52	0.60	3.43	0.68	1.90	9.82
4.	Allocation of Funds	22	1.68	0.78	3.55	0.60	1.86	8.43
5.	Provision of Furniture	23	1.74	0.81	3.52	0.59	1.78	8.57
6.	School Supplies	22	1.50	0.60	3.27	0.94	1.77	8.15
7.	Library Books	21	1.52	0.68	3.29	1.10	1.76	7.11
8.	Student Discipline	23	2.04	0.93	3.78	0.42	1.74	7.61
9.	Textbooks/Stationery	23	1.78	0.90	3.52	0.95	1.74	7.09
10.	In-service Training	22	1.82	1.01	3.50	0.80	1.68	6.99
11.	Staff Discipline	23	2.00	1.00	3.65	0.71	1.65	7.12
12.	Quality of Teaching Staff	24	1.96	0.86	3.58	0.72	1.63	8.21
13.	Appointment of Teachers	23	1.74	0.75	3.35	1.07	1.61	7.47
14.	Principal/Teacher Salaries	21	1.67	0.73	3.24	1.79	1.57	6.42
15.	Classroom Instruction	23	1.87	1.06	3.35	0.89	1.48	5.41
16.	Design of Courses	24	2.08	1.25	3.33	0.76	1.25	4.73
17.	Extra-curricular Activities	22	2.05	0.95	3.27	0.77	1.23	3.90
18.	Size of Classes	22	2.32	1.04	3.36	0.79	1.05	4.04
19.	Appointment of Principal	24	2.04	1.12	3.08	1.02	1.04	3.43
20.	Examination/Testing	22	2.14	1.12	3.00	1.07	0.86	3.91
21.	Admission of Students	19	2.11	1.10	2.89	1.04	0.79	2.80
22.	Student Promotion	23	2.13	1.25	2.87	1.06	0.74	2.18

*All differences were significant at .01 level

Table 17

Community Leaders' Actual and Preferred Involvement

Mean: Actual: 1.85 Preferred: 3.37

QUADRANT 1 *Low Actual- High Preferred* Audio-visual Aids Provision/Renovation of Schools Equipment for Science, etc. Allocation of Funds Provision of Furniture Textbooks/Stationery In-service Training	QUADRANT 2 *High Actual - High Preferred* Student Discipline Staff Discipline Quality of Teaching Staff
QUADRANT 4 *Low Actual - Low Preferred* School Supplies Library Books Appointment of Teachers. Principal/Teacher Salaries	QUADRANT 3 *High Actual - Low Preferred* Classroom Instruction Design of Courses Extra-curricular activities Size of Classes Appointment of Principal Examination/Testing Admission of Students Student Promotion

Leaders have indicated that these are decision areas in which their level of involvement has been low but with which they would desire greater involvement. It is worthy of note that these issues include allocation of funds and provision/renovation of schools. These two issues are probably the most difficult to provide given the unstable economic situation of the people. As community leaders, therefore, they would seem to be be content if they were given greater control in deciding on these issues.

In the above sections of this chapter, analyses of the questionnaire data gathered from stakeholders were presented. In the next section, main points of the findings will be discussed. In particular, views expressed by a sample of stakeholder groups during interviews will be examined.

DISCUSSION

The questionnaire analysis indicated that there were discrepancies between stakeholders' level of actual involvement in school decision-making and the level of involvement they would prefer. All stakeholder groups indicated that they were actually involved in school decision-making under the decentralized system. They would, however, prefer more involvement than they have had. For all stakeholder groups, there were greater discrepancies in respect of items related to educational resources than items related to the actual process of education. This means that stakeholders perceive that they would be comfortable with less control over pedagogical issues. They would, however, be more content if given more control over school decisions related to educational resources.

Interviews were conducted to afford stakeholder groups opportunities to express their views more vividly on these issues.

Interviews were held with the District Director of Education (DDE), the District Coordinator (DC) of the Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) and the Public

Relations Officer (PRO). These officers are basically charged with the responsibility of supervising and monitoring basic education to ensure effective and efficient delivery of education service to the community. Until the introduction of the new system in 1987, their role had been that of implementing policies and decisions of the Ministry of Education. Under the new system, however, district office administrators were expected not only to implement the Ministry's decisions, but also to make some decisions affecting the district when the need arose.

The District Director stated that under the new system, "the district office looks up to the Ministry as a policy making body while we at the district office see to the implementation of the policies." He observed further, "details of such policies are spelt out in circulars, letters and seminars we attend. Many are spelt out to us and we also brief officers under us who really see to the implementation of the policies." On school decision-making, the Director stated that they could make suggestions to the Ministry when they saw that the policies were not working.

It seems that although the administrators are involved in a decentralized decision-making, they still look up to the headquarters for policies and decisions which are sent down to them for implementation. Furthermore in deciding on some of these issues they need approval first. This may, in part, explain the discrepancies between the extent of their actual involvement and their preferred level of involvement.

Interviews were held also with some headmasters. Headmasters and district officers are both educational administrators. The headmaster, however occupies a unique position. The AASA (1990, p. 8) stated:

> The principal is the only one in a school building who sees the whole school. That gives the principal an even more important role to play in a system of school-based management. Although many other members of the school community will be involved in making decisions, the principal will have the unique perspective of seeing all aspects of the school.

In the education district, district administrative officers were seen as superordinates by headmasters. These officers and headmasters occupied different positions in the administrative hierarchy. Because of this, in certain respects they differed in their perceptions of actual and preferred involvement in school decision-making. Headmasters' responses indicated that they would be more comfortable if they were given control over several issues, particularly educational resources. Officers, on the other hand, indicated that they would be more content if given control over allocation of resources and appointment of teachers.

One headmaster who was the chairman of the District Headmasters' Association observed, "The Junior Secondary Schools are community-based hence the community is requested to take charge of all school equipment. As a head I don't take school decisions alone but with the direct involvement of the community. A decision taken at meetings becomes binding on all parents." When asked whether there were any issues that should be left to be decided exclusively by headmasters/mistresses, a headmistress pointed to issues such as examinations and promotions, choice of courses by students, classroom instruction, appointment of teachers and size of classes. The reason, according to her, was that since school-based administrators were with the students, they were in the best position to know the academic needs of the students, for example, through the process of continuous assessment.

Another headmaster said, "under the current educational structure which involves the community, I am able to present my problems which are readily solved. I am happy with my present role since the structures facilitate my administration." It was understood that these were decisions affecting the individual schools and, as the Director stated earlier on, such decisions must not be in conflict with the official policies.

The current situation then is that heads of schools can rarely make decisions alone. Whatever decisions they take must be in conjunction with the community and must be in line with official policies.

A number of teachers were also interviewed. Teachers work under the same roof with headmasters although headmasters' roles are more directly connected with school-based management while teachers primarily perform roles as classroom instructors. Responses for teachers were therefore compared with those of headmasters. In such a comparison, similarities as well as differences were found in their perceptions of actual and preferred involvement in school decision making. For both groups the larger differences related more to school resource items than items relating to pedagogy of education. Heads particularly preferred more involvement with decision items like provision of furniture, textbooks and stationery, staff discipline, appointment of teachers and quality of teaching staff. On the other hand, teachers as classroom instructors, indicated a preference for more involvement with classroom work, behavior of students they work with and textbooks and stationery. They work with the school principal as an initiator of decisions, but the level of their preferred involvement in his/her appointment was not as high as the level of preferred involvement with what happened daily in the classroom.

In an interview, one teacher observed that her primary role in the school was that of teaching in the classroom, but was also engaged in some aspects of school administration. These aspects of administration, according to her, related to issues such as examinations, promotion and student discipline. Another teacher cited an example of having to deal with student disciplinary problem such as "wee" (Indian hemp) smoking. The teacher said, "dealing with administrative matters such as these brings satisfaction to me; but the low standard of students with language problems, for example, makes teaching difficult. Otherwise I'm satisfied with the current open climate in which I put forward my opinions and views freely."

Another teacher conceded that his main job was to know his students, how they were getting on academically and how he could help them, especially those who lagged behind. He said that was his main concern but in making decisions affecting a teacher's job, he was also often involved and was happy about that.

Therefore, although teachers are actually involved in decision-making, it seems that they would more satisfied if they were allowed more control in the schools. As the AASA (1990, p. 8) pointed out, "today school-based management is typically discussed in terms of "empowering" teachers. Certainly one of the most important advantages of this process is its ability to take full advantage of the expertise of teachers." This may be good grounds on which teachers are asking for more involvement in the school decision making.

Headmasters and teachers do not operate schools alone. Parents also form an important group of stakeholders in education service delivery. They make diverse contributions towards the success of work in the school. As the school's clients, therefore, their involvement in school decision-making becomes crucial. Johnson (1991, p. 4) argued that parents should "have the right to participation in planning and decision-making that produce the outcomes of schooling."

In the questionnaire responses, parents indicated that they were actually involved in school decision-making. Like all other stakeholders, however, they would prefer more involvement in deciding on school issues.

Those parents who were interviewed, agreed that they were involved in school matters, but the only opportunity they had of getting involved was the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). One parent noted, "The only opportunity we have is through the PTA where we discuss matters affecting, for example, the construction of workshops and the provision of furniture." When this parent was asked to state how his views affected the final decisions, he declared, "I haven't had any opportunity to influence any final decision but just to contribute towards discussions." This may be an indication that although parents were actually involved, there is a need for more involvement through other avenues such as school councils.

The views expressed by these parents were corroborated by school administrators. They spoke of parent involvement as occurring through the PTA. The Director observed, "We meet members of the PTA and discuss with them their responsibilities to the schools. We also meet the Implementation Committee as well as the School Committee. We deal directly with these Committees." The PRO added that "occasionally during PTA and school open days officers of the district interact with parents. He said, "We use these occasions as platforms to explain government policies on education and give advice to parents." Similar views were expressed by the JSS Coordinator. One headmaster asserted, "The community members don't have time. Hence we expect the PTA to carry out all functions -- we accept all decisions and proposals made by the PTA Executive." Another headmaster also remarked that sometimes before meetings they sent out letters to parents in students' own handwriting. Parents from all walks of life usually attended such meetings at which many of them expressed their views.

The notion then is that parents are not left out of school decision-making, but it is not clear to what extent their views affect final decisions. This might be the reason why they expressed a preference for more involvement.

Another group expected to make contributions towards community education is community leaders. They are expected to play a leading role in the provision of social services including education. Unlike parents they are not expected to have wards in any particular school before they show involvement. They are required to lead by virtue of the positions they occupy in the community.

In the interviews held with community leaders, they confirmed the opportunity they had of being involved in school decision-making. A leader was asked to comment on such opportunities. He remarked, "Appreciably; but such decisions have to do with the standard and cost of living of the people and their clear understanding of their educational obligations." What this leader implied was that, although community leaders had some opportunities to get involved with educational decision-making, probably because of problems with their daily living and the lack of understanding of their educational obligations, such opportunities were not utilized much. Another leader stated, "I am satisfied with the current opportunities to influence education because it has not disturbed the usual avenues we have for interaction with the school authorities." An Assembly member indicated that as a community leader, he required the active participation of the whole community, for example, in the provision of educational resources. This participation, he noted was not forthcoming because "the people don't understand and they need more education."

It seemed then that although community leaders were involved, a number of factors such as cost and standard of living, lack of understanding and education limited the extent of their involvement as leaders in the community. Ziegler et al. (1985), cited in Coleman & LaRocque (1990, p.130) asserted that:

> The concern for community involvement which is frequently expressed by public school administrators and school trustees . . . has justification in the need for community assistance in instructional matters to ensure the improvement of schooling. There is also the need for involvement in order to generate political support for schools . . .

The remarks made by educational administrators with regard to the role of community leaders cast more light on these observations. Referring to the role of the JSS Implementation Committee predominantly made up of community leaders, the Director of Education said

> I am not at all satisfied. There isn't any improvement on the role of the Committee. It looks as if they do not have the time to meet. We don't see its impact. That is why sometimes it is necessary to have only a few members in a school committee that are interested in the schools in the locality to deal with them. So when the Implementation Committee isn't working, a committee termed School Committee will be working. That is the committee I work with.

The PRO observed that the communities were being encouraged to be actively involved in the schools in the various communities. One headmaster stated, "It has been observed that the community members desire to participate in decision-making. However, time constraints caused by their day to day activities, for example, farming and trading, kept them away from full participation." On the other hand, another headmaster in praise of community leaders in his locality noted, "The community has a large say, for example, in my appointment as a headmaster. The community with its leaders had to come in to support my appointment against others who were supposed to be more senior and more qualified." A teacher also pointed out that the community was helping, but could do better. He noted that community members led by their leaders sometimes came to the school for communal labour. They also contributed towards the development of school either in cash or in kind.

The issue that seems to require an appraisal is leadership commitment to mobilizing the community to provide the required support for the new educational reforms. Lack of such leadership expertise and commitment place a limitation on a community's contribution towards education.

To conclude, it seems that the "structure" for involvement is in place. The only problem seems to be that district officers feel overly constrained by policies. The spirit of involvement also seems to be present since parents, teachers, and headmasters talk of processes of involvement -- but involvement in what? The limitations of resources may mean that they have nothing sustantial about which to make decisions. Perhaps this results in the system not realizing the potential benefits of decentralization. This may explain why almost all stakeholders identified resource-related items as being the highest priority.

Teachers prefer to be empowered to make important pedagogical decisions. This may be an improvement related to decentralization. Decentralization presupposes that people closest to an area are in the best position to know that area's needs. In the same vein, teachers have suggested that since they spend more time with students in the classroom than any other persons, they should be given more control in deciding on the students' academic needs. If teachers are denied this type of control, they may feel uncomfortable, and so are more likey to ask for more control. In that case, it could be argued that decentralization cannot be effective until classroom teachers are empowered to make decisions affecting the basic unit of education -- the classroom.

Summary

This chapter presented the data on perceptions of district office administrators, headmasters, teachers, parents and community leaders as stakeholders on the extent of their actual and preferred involvement in school decision-making under Ghana's new educational system. Analysis of their perceptions indicated significant differences between actual and preferred involvement for all decision items. However, from headmasters' perceptions, differences with respect to four decision items were not significant.

Actual involvement in decision-making

Stakeholders as a group were actually involved in school decision-making on school issues. They were involved more with decisions pertaining to pedagogical issues such as admission of students, classroom instructions, examination and testing and school discipline. They were less involved with educational resource issues as the provision and renovation of of schools, furniture, textbooks, stationery and audio-visual aids. Similar trends of involvement were found in the analyses of individual group responses with the exception of community leaders who indicated less actual involvement generally.

Preferred involvement in decision making

Stakeholders, without any exception, preferred more involvement in school decision making than they had in the new system. The extent of preferred involvement was similar for the groups except headmasters who indicated a higher preference for those items in which their actual involvement was already relatively high. Although the indication from community leaders was that probably they had actually not utilized the opportunity they had of being involved, they indicated a preference for more involvement.

In general, the status quo was not acceptable to stakeholders regarding the extent to which they were involved with many of the school issues. For office administrators, headmasters and teachers, opportunity for more involvement probably existed if they would collaborate with the District Assembly. As the AASA (1988, p.17) pointed out, for school-based management to be most effective, some districts may need to work with the legislature and the state department of education. For parents and community leaders they were already expected to be more involved particularly with the procurement of school resources.

CHAPTER V

PERCEIVED PROBLEMS OF THE DECENTRALIZED SCHOOL SYSTEM

One of the objectives for the introduction of decentralization in Ghana's school system was that of addressing the problems that adversely affected education under the centralization policy. Fifteen potential problem issues were identified through a review of the literature, from educational administrators and other stakeholders, as well as from the researcher's own experience of the old system.

On the questionnaire survey, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they perceived each issue to be a problem in the new system. In addition, a number of respondents from each stakeholder group were selected for interviews. The objective of the interviews was to offer respondents opportunities to more carefully express their views on the perceived problems.

To assess the nature and extent of the perceived problems in Ghana's newly decentralized school system was an important focus for this study. This is because the nature and extent of the problem issues in a system that is undergoing reforms could militate against the attainment of objectives of the reforms. The existence of such problem issues in a system that is undergoing reforms militate against the attainment of objectives of the reforms. It is, therefore, important for policy makers as well as stakeholders to be aware of the existence of problems in a new system. This awareness may allow them to act in ways to counteract the potentially negative consequences related to those problem areas. Hence this chapter examines stakeholders' perceptions of problems affecting the newly decentralized educational system, as well as the extent to which these problems might adversely affect the smooth operation of the decentralized system.

The analysis focuses on two of the sub-problems for this study:

1. What are the perceptions of stakeholders of the extent of problems under the decentralized system?
2. Are there any differences among stakeholder groups with respect to their perceptions of the quality of schooling as indicated by the extent of problems under the decentralized system?

The chapter begins with a presentation of the perceptions of all of the stakeholders as a group. This serves the purpose of conveying a broad perspective on the potential problem issues. Following this is an examination of the perceptions of the five sub-groups among the stakeholders (district office administrators, headmasters, teachers, parents and community leaders). This is done because each of these stakeholders groups perceives the problems somewhat differently. The chapter concludes with a discussion of both the manner in which the perceptions of the various stakeholders relate to each other and the general conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis.

Problems as Perceived by All Stakeholders as a Group

A summary of responses indicating stakeholders' perceptions of problem issues under the new system is presented in Table 18.

This table, and the others presented in this chapter display frequencies (f) and percentages (%) for each of the five choices that respondents had for each of the relevant questionnaire items. The choices ranged from "not a problem" (1) to "major problem" (5). The tables also display the means (M) and the standard deviations (SD) for each item. The means are taken to be a measure of the seriousness of a particular problem. Throughout the chapter, items with means of 4.0 or greater are discribed as "major problems", those with means between 3.0 and 4.0 are described as "moderate problems", and those with means lower than 3.0 are described as "slight problems." The items on the table are ranked according to the size of the means. The standard deviations are taken to be a measure of agreement. That is if the standard deviation is relatively low, this indicates that the group whose data were analyzed is in close agreement, whereas if the standard deviation is relatively high, the group was in such close disagreement.

The analysis in Table 18 identifies two major problems: "inadequate incentives" (item 1) with a mean of 4.27 closely followed by "insufficient resources" (item 2) with a mean of 4.24. Moreover, for these items, the standard deviations were relatively low (.99 and .94 respectively) indicating that there was a high level of agreement with respect to the seriousness of these problems. Of the items meeting the criterion for identification as moderate problems, are -- "insufficient local resources" (item 3) with a mean 3.94 and a standard deviation of 1.04, comes very close to meeting the criterion for major problems. Three items meet the criteria for identification as slight problems: "lack of self confidence of all parties" (item 13), "policy makers do not know what is expected of them" (item 14), and "educational administrators unsure of their responsibilities" (item 15), (mean of 2.86, 2.74 and 2.67 respectively). It is worth noting that these three items identified as the most serious problems related to resources, and that four of the next five related to the readiness of the community to support decentralized schools. Issues that relate more closely to school-level operations (e.g, "fear of criticism for making mistakes" (item 11), lack of local ability to exercise proper control" (item 9) and "educational administrators unsure of their responsibilities" (item 15) were lower in the rating.

This may suggest that while stakeholders perceive that schools are relatively ready to take advantage of decentralization, they are constrained by the inflexity imposed by insufficient resources with which to work and by their communities not being adequately prepared to support decentralized operations.

Table 18

Extent of the Educational System's Potential Problems
as Perceived by all Stakeholders

		Not a Problem								Major Problem			
		1		2		3		4		5		M	SD
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1.	Inadequate incentives to play leading role	6	2.5	9	3.8	29	12.3	63	26.7	127	53.8	4.27	.99
2.	Insufficient resources allocated	5	2.1	6	2.5	33	14.0	75	31.8	117	49.6	4.24	.94
3.	Insufficient local resources to tap	7	3.0	17	7.2	42	17.8	88	37.3	82	43.7	3.94	1.04
4.	Lack of commitment of community members	23	9.7	21	8.9	29	12.3	57	24.2	106	44.9	3.86	1.34
5.	Community did not receive adequate information	12	5.1	40	16.9	28	11.9	51	21.6	103	43.6	3.83	1.30
6.	Community not ready to implement the new system	17	7.2	29	12.3	34	14.4	57	24.2	94	39.8	3.79	1.30
7.	Constraints through centrally determined rules	13	5.5	27	11.4	52	22.0	69	29.2	75	31.8	3.70	1.19
8.	Uncertainty of local community's role	18	7.6	26	11.0	42	17.8	82	34.7	68	28.8	3.66	1.22
9.	Lack of local ability to exercise proper control	24	10.2	36	15.3	38	16.1	79	33.5	59	25.0	3.48	1.29
10.	Insufficient implementation procedures	18	7.6	40	16.9	56	23.7	67	28.4	54	22.9	3.42	1.23
11.	Fear of criticism for making mistakes	19	8.1	40	16.9	61	25.8	55	23.3	59	25.0	3.41	1.26
12.	Top administrators unwilling to divest power	38	16.1	47	19.9	48	20.3	42	17.8	60	25.4	3.17	1.42
13.	Lack of self-confidence of all parties	38	16.1	67	28.4	55	23.3	38	16.1	36	15.3	2.86	1.30
14.	Policy makers do not know what is expected of them	54	22.9	64	27.1	46	19.5	32	13.6	39	16.5	2.74	1.39
15.	Educational Administrators unsure of responsibilities	56	23.7	61	25.8	56	23.7	29	12.3	33	14.0	2.67	1.34

Number of respinses for the various items ranged between 231 and 236.

Table 19

Extent of the Educational System's Potential Problems
as Perceived by District Office Administrators

	Not a Problem								Major Problem			
	1		2		3		4		5		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Inadequate incentives to play leading role	-	-	2	7.7	2	7.7	6	23.1	16	61.5	4.39	.94
2. Insufficient resources allocated-	-	-	-	-	7	26.9	9	34.6	10	38.5	4.12	.82
3. Lack of commitment of community members	-	-	1	3.8	6	23.1	9	34.6	10	38.5	4.08	.89
4. Uncertainty of local community's role	-	-	5	19.2	2	7.7	13	50.0	6	23.1	3.77	1.03
5. Community not ready to implement the new system	2	7.7	3	11.5	3	11.5	11	42.3	7	26.9	3.69	1.23
6. Insufficient local resources to tap	1	3.8	4	15.4	7.	26.9	5	19.2	9	34.6	3.65	1.23
7. Lack of local ability to exercise proper control	1	3.8	2	7.7	6	23.1	14	53.8	3	11.5	3.62	.94
8. Community did not receive adequate information	1	3.8	8.	30.8	3	11.5	6	23.1	8	30.8	3.46	1.33
9. Constraints through centrally determined rules	1	3.8	6	23.1	7	26.9	7	26.9	5	19.2	3.35	1.16
10. Fear of criticism for making mistakes	1	7.7	8	30.8	4	15.4	5	19.2	7	26.9	3.27	1.37
11. Insufficient implementation procedures	1	3.8	9	34.6	6	23.1	8	30.8	2	7.7	3.04	1.08
12. Top administrators unwilling to divest power	2	7.7	9	34.6	5	19.2	7	26.9	3	11.5	3.00	1.20
13. Lack of self-confidence of all parties	6	23.1	8	30.8	10	38.5	2	7.7	-	-	2.31	0.93
14. Educational administrators unsure of their responsibilities	7	26.9	10.	38.5	5	19.2	4	15.4	-	-	2.23	1.03
15. Policy makers do not know what is expected of them	9	34.6	12	46.2	2	7.7	2	7.7	1	3.8	2.00	1.05

Number of responses for each item was 26

The chapter now turns to an examination of the perceptions of each of the sub-groups among the stakeholders.

Problems as Perceived by District Office Administrators

Data summarizing the perceptions of district office administrators as to the extent of perceived problems under the new educational system are presented in Table 19.

As was the case with the group of all stakeholders, district officers who monitor education in the district saw inadequate incentives (item 1) (mean of 4.39) and insufficient allocation of funds (item 2) (mean of 4.12) as major problems. In addition, the officers perceived lack of commitment of community members (item 3) (mean of 4.08) as a major problem. And as the low standard deviations suggest, there was a high level of agreement with respect to these ratings.

Of the nine issues which the district officers saw as posing moderate problems, three of the four having means greater than 3.5 pertained to "community not ready to implement the new system" (item 5) (mean of 3. 69), "insufficient local resources to tap" (item 6), (mean of 3.65), and "lack of local ability to exercise proper control" (item 7) (mean of 3.62).

The three items rated as slight problems having means between 2.32 and 2.00 pertained to "lack of self-confidence of all parties" (item 13) (mean of 2.31), educational administrators unsure of their responsibilities" (item 14) (mean of 2.23), and "policy makers do not know what is expected of them" (item 15) (mean of 2.00)

Discussion

The analysis of district office administrators' responses suggest that they perceived that the major problems of the new educational system pertained to incentives and resources as well as the community's commitment to the performance of its expected role. It can be argued that these problems are three very fundamental issues which the new system sought to address, and thus their presence is of serious consequence for education in Ghana. Office administrators are officials whose primary responsibility is to see to the success of the educational reforms in the district. According to them, inadequate incentives have been the biggest problem followed by insufficient resources. These two issues were two top ranked problems probably because education service cannot be delivered without the motivating incentives. Incentives, on the other hand, cannot be bestowed without resources. Therefore lack of resources pose as disincentives for those who need to be involved to ensure the success of the system. Office administrators have indicated that issues such as self-confidence, being unsure of their responsibilities and the expertise of policy makers are not serious problems in the new system.

The decentralization policy by its very nature makes it incumbent on the community to demonstrate a firm commitment in the performance of its basic role of providing resources. If the community fails in this duty, the whole new system faces problems. Perhaps the success of the system as it is currently conceived depends upon the ability of the community to make major contributions of resources to local schools. And the data presented in the tables in this chapter suggests that this is problematic.

On the other hand, the situation might not be simply that of the community failing in its duty. The data suggest that uncertainty regarding the community's role is a significant problem. Apart from this uncertainty, the community was also not ready to implement the new system. Then there is also the problem of the local resources being insufficient to tap. Ensuring the success of the new educational system may be more complex than what was first envisioned.

In the responses to the open-ended question, district office administrators mentioned a number of other problems perceived by them in the new system. These problems related to (1) the precarious economic and financial situation of the people which has adversely affected the construction of workshops, provision of furniture and payment of school fees; (2) lack of or late arrival of textbooks, materials and equipment to teach the various technical skills; (3) accommodation and means of transport for education personnel; (4) inadequate number of qualified teachers to handle technical drawing, technical and vocational skills as well as Ghanaian and French Languages. It was lamented that in some schools only one or two teachers were handling all the subjects.

On the economic situation, one officer noted: "The economic constraints make it quite impossible for the local community members to play their rightful role." Another officer in support of this view observed: "Communities have no money to build their own schools and workshops." Another administrator stated:

> The wholesale introduction of the new educational system has overstretched the state's resources for education. Thus certain basic amenities like workshops have not been provided.

Referring to the problem of constraints, one officer contended: "Too much political interference from the top leaves the technocrats impotent to carry out the laid down policies, for example, the wholesale award of marks to pupils/students."

A number of officers also noted another problem which was that students who started the program were weak academically. For this reason one respondent argued that "the reform program should have begun from the nursery through primary, junior secondary to the senior secondary level. Low academic standards in the program is the result of inadequate preparation." The officers feel that if the new system had begun preparing pupils right from primary class one, the rather weak academic standard of students, as currently observed in the secondary schools, would probably have been better. On late arrival of textbooks to the schools as well as their inadequacy, one officer suggested that "textbooks should have been printed long before the start of the new educational program to ensure adequate and regular supplies to schools." This suggests that if the textbook issue had been adequately addressed prior to implementation of the decentralization policy, perhaps schools would not be facing textbook problems now.

Another basic problem noted relates to finance. It was observed that the community which was expected to provide a bulk of the inputs for the new system was not financially viable. They therefore looked up to the central government for substantial assistance. Yet in an interview, the District Budget Officer remarked that there was " the absence of real financial decentralization." In support of this view, the District Director of Education in an interview disclosed:

> Now it is the responsibility of the District Office to prepare budget to the Region for collation of all districts in the Region and these are sent to headquarters for approval. Sometimes what we have budgeted for is slashed and when it comes down to us, we try to work within the framework of the amount that has been sent to us."

The implication of the reduction in the amount which the District has budgeted for is that some of the requirements of the district in education service delivery will not be provided for. The central government cuts in finances seems to be done, however, with the expectation that whatever required extra funds would be derived from the communities. As the PRO stated: "The government seems to rely on the community to supplement government effort, but there is rural poverty which makes the policy ineffective."

A situation can therefore be discerned in the new system under which both the government and the community expect each other to provide adequate finances. These finances do not seem to be forthcoming because of inherent constraints. Financing education then is seen as a fundamental problem the solution of which is yet to be found.

Problems as Perceived by Headmasters

The analysis of the responses from 45 headmasters with respect to their perceptions of problems of the new educational system has been presented in a summary form in Table 20. As did the district officers, headmasters saw three issues as presenting major problems. These were inadequate incentives (mean of 4.40), lack of commitment of the community (mean of 4.11) and insufficient allocation of resources (mean of 4.02).

The standard deviations for these items (.90, 1.19, and 1.12) indicate a relatively high level of agreement, although not as high a level as was evident among the responses of district office administrators to the same items.

Nine items meet the criteria for moderate problems. Of these, seven have means greater than 3.5. Four of these relate to "community not ready to implement the new system" (item 3) (mean of 3.98), "community did not receive adequate information" (item 5) (mean of 3.95), "insufficient local resources to tap" (item 6) (mean of 3.91), and "uncertainty regarding local community's role." (item 7) (mean of 3.80). The other three, "constraints through centrally determined rules" (item 8) (mean 3.71), "fear of criticisms for making mistakes" (item 9) (mean of 3.70), and "insufficient implementation procedures" (item 10) (mean 3.52), seem to relate to the nature of the relationship between headmasters and their superordinates. One of the others with a lower mean "top administrators unwilling to divest power" (item 12) (mean of 3.27) relates to this same theme. It may also be worth noting that for headmasters, the local (school level) educational leaders, the item, "lack of local ability to exercise control" (item 11) achieved a mean of 3.47.

This seems to suggest that, for headmasters, there was a greater range of serious concerns than was the case for district office administrators or for all the stakeholders as a group.

Discussion

The main point would seem to be that headmasters perceive that the school system under the new educational policy is beset with relatively serious problems. The various educational issues, however, present problems of varying degrees. Like the office administrators, school-based administrators indicated that major problems relate to providing adequate incentives, the community showing commitment to the school system as well as allocating sufficient resources to the schools. These three major problems are interrelated. When the community shows commitment, it will probably endeavor to find the resources for the schools. The resources will then provide educators with the required incentives. It is evident from the headmasters' open responses, however, that the incentives do not refer only to the resources which the community will provide. For example, one headmaster observed that "the work load of teachers has been heavy while salaries and other benefits of the teacher has not been fully met." Salary improvement would obviously be the responsibility of the government. It was also understood from the responses that by "other benefits" the heads were referring to needs such as teachers' accommodation and means of transport. These benefits will have to be provided through a joint effort of the community and the government. The solutions to these problems may be a necessary but not sufficient condition for providing effective and efficient school system.

One headmaster noted:

> The success or failure of the new educational system depends mostly on the classroom teacher, but the classroom teacher feels his future is gloomy due to poor salaries and conditions of service. Therefore the general output in the classroom would not be as it is now if the teachers' problems were removed or at least minimized.

Other issues which present substantial problems, as indicated by the headmasters, included disseminating adequate information to the community,

Table 20
Extent of the Educational System's Potential Problems
as Perceived by Headmasters

	Not a Problem								Major Problem			
	1		2		3		4		5		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Inadequate incentives to play leading role	1	2.2	1	2.2	3	6.7	13	28.9	25	55.6	4.40	.90
2. Lack of commitment of community members	4	8.9	5	11.1	14	31.1	14	31.1	22	48.9	4.11	1.19
3. Insufficient resources allocated	2	4.4	2	4.4	9	20.0	12	26.7	20	44.4	4.02	1.12
4. Community not ready to implement new system	1	2.2	7	15.6	3	6.7	11	24.4	19	42.2	3.98	1.21
5. Community did not receive adequate information	2	4.4	5	11.1	5	11.1	12	26.7	19	42.2	3.95	1.21
6. Insufficient local resources to tap	3	6.7	3	6.7	3	6.7	22	48.9	14	31.1	3.91	1.13
7. Uncertainty regarding local community's role	4	8.9	2	4.4	9	20.0	14	31.1	16	35.6	3.80	1.24
8. Constraints through centrally determined rules	3	6.7	4	8.9	9.	20.0	16	35.6	13	28.9	3.71	1.18
9. Fear of criticism for making mistakes	2	4.4	5	11.1	12	26.7	9	20.0	15	33.3	3.70	1.21
10. Insufficient implementation procedures	4	8.9	6	13.3	9	20.0	13	28.9	12	26.7	3.52	1.29
11. Lack of local ability to exercise control	3	6.7	9	20.0	7	15.6	16	35.6	10	22.2	3.47	1.24
12. Top administrators unwilling to divest power	9	20.0	3	6.7	10	22.2	13	28.9	10	22.2	3.27	1.42
13. Educational administrators unsure of their responsibilities	9	20.0	9	20.0	16	35.6	2	4.4	9	20.0	2.84	1.36
14. Lack of confidence of all parties	7	15.6	13	28.9	14	31	6	13.3	5	11.1	2.76	1.21
15. Policy makers do not know what is expected of them	9	20.0	12	26.7	11.	24.4	5	11.1	7	15.6	2.75	1.35

Number of responses for the various items varied between 41 and 45

removing centrally determined rules which the heads perceive as constraints and providing sufficient directives to stakeholders so that each stakeholder group could identify its role in the system.

It is important to observe from the headmasters' responses that being unsure of their responsibilities as school administrators present only a slight problem. They indicated also that they have some self-confidence for the work and that to a large extent policy makers are aware of what is expected of them.

In their responses to the open-ended question, headmasters pointed to problems many of which are similar to those mentioned by district officers. One common problem related to lack of infrastructure such as workshops and equipment. Headmasters pointed also to lack of school supplies including printed materials such as term assessment plans, terminal report cards and cumulative record cards which have not been made available particularly in the remote areas of the district.

Apart from the inherent problems with resources, the unfavorable conditions under which the new system was initiated created initial problems. It was noted that "both teachers and students were not fully prepared for the sudden change." One headmaster also asserted:

> Educational reforms should start from the primary school so as to ensure that by the time the children get to the top level, they are well tuned in to the new concept as well as to have enough skilled personnel (teachers) to handle the primary, junior secondary and the senior secondary schools in the new subjects which were absent in the teacher training syllabus previously.

What the headmasters seem to be implying is that the new system began with students who had not been prepared for and did not spend adequate period in the junior secondary school (JSS) to acquire new skills. The acquisition of new skills, such as technical drawing, leather work, carpentry, and home economics was an important objective of the new system. For this reason a headmaster observed that "the fate of the JSS graduates who could not qualify to enter senior secondary school (SSS) hangs in the balance."

These views from the open responses were largely corroborated by the headmasters who were interviewed. In an interview, a headmaster noted among other problems that " JSS students who did not gain access to the SSS were seen as drop-outs because they had not been fully trained as the new system intended." It was also pointed out that in some rural areas there were no schools and therefore students were required to travel elsewhere. Parents did not have the means to meet the expenses involved in such transfers.

Finally it was also noted in the interviews that "teachers were posted haphazardly without taking cognizance of their subject specialization. The result was that some subjects like French language were often left uncatered for."

Overall, the headmasters seem to feel that the problems which hampered the success of the school system under the centralized system are still prevalent to a large extent.

Problems as Perceived by Teachers

The analysis of the responses of the 84 teachers who returned the questionnaire are presented in Table 21. The data displayed in this table follows a pattern much like the data from the headmasters. While only two of the resource-related items meet the criterion for major problems "insufficient allocation of resources" (mean of 4.27), and "inadequate incentives to play leading role (mean of 4.27), the third resource-related item, "insufficient local resources to tap", comes very close, having a mean of 3.95. The community readiness-related items are next in the ranking with means ranging from 3.79 to 3.73, suggesting that the teachers perceived this as a relatively serious source of problems. Items related to the relationship between school-level personnel and superordinates "constraints through centrally determined rules" (mean of 3.67), "fear of criticism for making mistakes" (mean of 3.42), and "insufficient implementation procedures" (mean of 3.33) meet the criterion for moderate problems. Also like headmasters, for teachers, "lack of local ability to exercise control" achieved a relatively high mean (3.52).

Teachers seem to be less convinced than were headmasters that top administrators being unwilling to divest power was a problem. For headmasters, this item achieved a mean of 3.27, and for teachers, 2.80. However, F-tests conducted to test the significance of such differences found this difference to be not significant.

Discussion

With only a few exceptions, teachers agreed with district office administrators and headmasters in their perceptions of the extent of the problems prevailing in the new system. Teachers are charged with the responsibility of implementing educational policies and decisions. According to them, the two biggest problems of the new system are insufficient allocation of resources and inadequate incentives. It has been observed that these two issues are closely linked because lack of resources is a strong disincentive to teachers' work in the classroom.

Teachers, like district officers and headmasters, perceived the community's inability to perform its expected roles as a relatively serious problem. A respondent stated that "many community members are either showing apathy or are financially too poor to assist." In the open responses, teachers pointed out many problems pertaining to the community's role. These problems reflected the type of frustrations which teachers were encountering in the classroom. They related more to resources than to the pedagogy of education. The resources to which teachers referred most often were workshops, textbooks and stationery, technical equipment for practical work, equipped science laboratories, and furniture.

Table 21
Extent of the Educational System's Potential Problems as Perceived by Teachers

	Not a Problem 1		2		3		4		Major Problem 5		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Insufficient resources are allocated	3	3.6	2	2.4	7	8.3	29	34.5	43	51.2	4.27	.97
2. Inadequate incentives to play leading role	5	6.0	3	3.6	8	9.5	19	22.6	49	58.3	4.27	1.15
3. Insufficient local resources to tap	2	2.4	8	9.5	12	14.3	32	38.1	30	35.7	3.95	1.05
4. Lack of commitment of community members	8	9.5	10	11.9	9	10.7	22	26.2	35	41.7	3.79	1.35
5. Community not ready to implement the new system	7	8.3	10	11.9	15	17.9	15	17.9	36	42.9	3.76	1.35
6. Community did not receive adequate information	6	7.1	15	17.9	13	15.5	11	13.1	11	13.1	3.74	1.39
7. Uncertainty regarding local community's role	6	7.1	8	9.5	13	15.5	33	39.3	24	28.6	3.73	1.19
8. Constraints through centrally determined rules	6	7.1	8	9.5	20	23.6	24	28.6	26	31.0	3.67	1.22
9. Lack of local ability to exercise control	8	9.5	14	16.7	14	16.7	22	26.2	26	31.0	3.52	1.34
10. Fear of criticism for making mistakes	8	9.5	14	16.7	22	26.2	15	17.9	25	29.8	3.42	1.33
11. Insufficient implementation procedures	8	9.5	12	14.3	26	31.0	20	23.8	18	21.4	3.33	1.24
12. Lack of self-confidence of all parties	12	14.3	23	27.4	18	21.4	17	20.2	14	16.7	2.98	1.32
13. Policy makers do not know what is expected of them	18	21.4	21	25.0	14	16.7	13	15.5	18	21.4	2.91	1.46
14. Top administrators unwilling to divest power	20	23.8	18	21.4	20	23.8	9	10.7	16	19.0	2.80	1.43
15. Educational administrators unsure of their responsibilities	25	29.8	26	31.0	18	21.4	9	10.7	6	7.1	2.35	1.22

Number of responses for the various items varied between 83 and 84

Teachers also observed that there were insufficient trained teachers particularly for technical subjects and some languages such as French and Ghanaian languages. A teacher observed that "at the 4th milestone of the JSS, some schools still have only two teachers." Another teacher remarked:

> The greatest problem, to me, is the lack of tutors for basic skills. No proper teaching and learning can take place without a tutor. The students are there with all the equipment, but who is to teach them?

The essence of the JSS was the acquisition of practical skills. Therefore, if teachers of practical skills were lacking, then there was indeed a problem.

Teachers referred also to the problem of store houses to keep the tools that had been supplied by the government. It was noted that because of the absence of workshops, schools did not have suitable store rooms for the equipments. For this reason, one teacher noted "most of the tools supplied are getting rusty in the headmasters' store rooms." On this issue, a headmaster had pointed out earlier that his school's equipment was in the custody of the PTA chairman.

A concern which teachers expressed during interviews related to students' inability to cope with the work at the JSS level. It was observed that students generally fell below the expected academic standard. A teacher noted that "the foundation of the students at the primary level is weak; hence we find it difficult to find a starting point in teaching."

The perceptions of teachers, therefore, indicate that the new system even with decentralization, is beset with a variety of problems which make attainment of the objectives of the new system difficult.

Problems as Perceived by Parents

The analysis of the relevant data from the 54 questionnaires collected from parents is presented in Table 21. Only one problem, insufficient allocation of funds, with a mean of 4.26 met the criterion for identification as a serious problem. Two others, however, were very close: inadequate incentives (mean of 3.98) and insufficient local resources (mean of 3.96).

Moreover, the standard deviations of these items (.81, .88, and .82 respectively) suggest that there was a remarkably high agreement among parents that these were very serious problems. As was the case with other stakeholder groups, the community-readiness-related items are high among those that meet the criteria for moderate problems. There are two other points worth noting about the problems that meet the criteria for moderate problems. The first is that the item, "top administrators unwilling to divest power" achieved a much higher mean for parents (3.27) than it did for teachers (2.80) or headmasters (3.27). Although the F-tests did not identify these differences as significant (see Table 24), it may be that parents are slightly more concerned about the motives of top administrators with respect to power than are school-level personnel. The second point is that parents, like headmasters and teachers rated "lack of local ability to exercise control" as a moderate problem. In their responses to the open-ended question, parents, like administrators and teachers, referred most often to the problem of inadequate resources, for example, allocation of funds. A respondent admitting that parents had contributions to make in that respect stated, "There is lack of funds on the part of parents to pay for the numerous demands from the new educational policy, for example, registration fees, science fair fund, tickets for sports, games, culture and music fees, PTA fund, etc." Parents also identified as a problem their unpreparedness for the new system at the time it was introduced.

Table 22
Extent of the Educational System's Potential Problems as Perceived by Parents

	Not a Problem 1		2		3		4		Major Problem 5		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Insufficient resources are allocated	-	-	1	1.9	9	16.7	19	35.2	25	46.3	4.26	.81
2. Inadequate incentives to play leading role	-	-	3	5.6	12	22.2	22	40.7	17	31.5	3.98	.88
3. Insufficient local resources to tap	-	-	2	3.7	13	24.1	24	44.4	15	27.8	3.96	.82
4. Lack of commitment of community members	3	5.6	9	16.7	8	14.8	11	20.4	23	42.6	3.78	1.31
5. Community not ready to implement the new system	1	1.9	9	16.7	10	18.5	16	20.6	18	33.3	3.76	1.15
6. Community did not receive adequate information	3	5.6	11	20.4	6	11.1	12	22.2	22	40.7	3.72	1.34
7. Top administrators unwilling to divest power	4	7.4	17	31.5	6	11.1	9	16.7	18	33.3	3.70	1.42
8. Constraints through centrally determined rules	3	5.6	7	13.0	14	25.9	17	31.5	13	24.4	3.56	1.16
9. Insufficient implementation procedures	2	3.7	11	20.4	11	20.4	17	31.5	13	24.1	3.52	1.18
10. Uncertainty of local community's role	3	5.6	10	18.5	14	25.9	15	27.8	12	22.2	3.43	1.19
11. Lack of local ability to exercise control	6	11.1	10	18.5	9	16.7	19	35.2	10	18.5	3.32	1.29
12. Fear of criticism for making mistakes	4	7.4	10	18.5	15	27.8	21	38.9	4	7.4	3.20	1.07
13. Educational administrators unsure of their responsibilities	9	16.7	13	24.1	9	16.7	12	22.2	10	18.5	3.02	1.39
14. Lack of self confidence of all parties	6	11.1	18	33.3	9	16.7	10	18.5	9	16.7	2.96	1.31
15. Policy makers do not know what is expected of them	12	22.2	17	31.5	11	20.4	7	13.0	7	13.0	2.63	1.32

Number of responses for the various items varied between 52 and 54

Various comments made in that regard included (1) "the old people were not ready to give up the old system for the new;" (2) "the new system being quite alien, the old people feared its success;"(3) "top political leadership rushed the program and neglected the lower forms;"and (4) "one can say that children were not fully prepared for the courses designed for them."

Discussion

Parents perceived the major problems with the new system to relate to resources. Although they recognized the role they should play, it seems that they perceived the problem of providing resources largely as belonging to the central government. With respect to one of these issues (provision of incentives), a parent remarked that:

> Coupled with insufficient allocation of resources to schools is the improper supervision of staff by the appointed officials, the problem of insufficient motivation for teachers. Frankly if the latter problem is not given a serious attention, the program is not likely to achieve its goals.

The general view held by parents is evident in the remarks made by some of them to the effect that: "The state has failed to provide workshops for the poor communities." Another parent observed: "Whenever the resources such as tools, books, etc. are made available to the various schools, the new system will succeed."

Another problem noted by parents is the perception that teachers were not giving their best in the classrooms. Some parents noted that (1) there was lack of devotion on the part of teachers; (2) teachers must not be lazy with the preparation of their result sheets for the pupils/students at all times; (3) there were laxity and poor administrative control among some teachers in the schools; (4) there are favoritism, nepotism and corruption among teachers and local administrators. Parents also had the notion that there were not enough qualified teachers in the system. As one of them pointed out, there was a "lack of trained teachers to handle the technical subjects in the new educational system" while another parent also noted that "in some schools one teacher is loaded with so many subjects."

In an interview the views expressed by one parent emphasized the complexity of the problems. He noted:

> The first few batches of pupils had virtually no academic foundation -- caused by poor teaching in the past, poor parental care or involvement and by government policy of wholesale promotion, lack of textbooks and other teaching equipment, poor quality teachers, lack of commitment to teaching on the part of teachers. Many were compelled by circumstances to take to teaching, not because they were naturally interested in teaching.

The parent added that the problem of inadequate qualified teachers had become aggravated "because the community had no say in the appointment, promotion, transfer and remuneration of teachers."

Referring to the objective of acquiring practical skills in the new system, many stakeholders, including parents, expressed concern that the objective was not being achieved. One parent asserted:

> The new system seeks to help the child to use both his brain and hands -- not only his brain as in the past. There is supposed to be 50-50 emphasis on both academic and practical skills. However, in the implementation, the practical aspect hasn't been given the needed prominence; that is, currently the situation is as if we are back to the old system. Pupils are still learning those theoretical things.

The general view of the parents therefore was that problems of the decentralized system have not been addressed to the extent they expected.

Problems as Perceived by Community Leaders

Data summarizing the perceptions 26 community leaders are presented in Table 23. A general observation is that there seems to be substantial differences between the views of the community leaders and those of any other stakeholder group.

For the community leaders, six items meet the criterion for the identification as serious problems. For each of the other groups, no more than three items meet this criterion. Moreover, for the community leaders, only three of the items achieved the means of 3.5. The community leaders seem to perceive there to be more serious and relatively serious problems than do any of the other stakeholder groups.

A point of agreement between the community leaders and the other stakeholders relates to the items noted as the most serious problems. "Insufficient resources" (item 1) and "inadequate incentives" (item 2) achieved means of 4.58 and 4.48 respectively. The standard deviations (.76 for both items) indicate that there was a very close agreement on the seriousness of these problems.

The other four items which meet the criteria for serious problems are: "community did not receive adequate information" (item 3), (mean of 4.46), "constraints through centrally determined rules" (item 4), (mean of 4.42), "insufficient local resources to tap' (item 5), (mean of 4.12), and "top administrators unwilling to divest power" (item 6), (mean of 4.00). One of these items reflects the concern about resources. Two seem to relate to potential problems associated with the central administration (central constraints and unwillingness to divest power). Only one community-readiness-related item met the criterion for identification as a serious problem. It is perhaps interesting to note that the other community-readiness related items were considerably lower in the ranking than was the case for any of the other stakeholder groups. None of these differences, however, was found to be statistically significant (see Table 24). Nevertheless, in terms of relative seriousness of the problems, it seems that the community leaders rate issues for which they are responsible (readiness, uncertainty with respect to role, and lack of community commitment) as much less serious than issues for which educational administrators are responsible.

Table 23
Extent of the Educational System's Potential Problems
as Perceived by Community Leaders

	Not a Problem 1		2		3		4		Major Problem 5		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Insufficient resources are allocated	-	-	1	3.8	1	3.8	6	23.1	18	69.2	4.58	.76
2. Inadequate incentives to play leading role	-	-	-	-	4	15.4	3	11.5	19	73.1	4.48	.76
3. Community did not receive adequate information	-	-	1	3.8	1	3.8	9	34.6	15	57.7	4.46	.76
4. Constraints through centrally determined rules	-	-	2	7.7	2	7.7	5	19.2	17	65.4	4.42	.94
5. Insufficient local resources to tap	1	3.8	-	-	7	26.9	5	19.2	13	50.0	4.12	1.07
6. Top administrators unwilling unwilling to divest power	2	7.7	-	-	7	26.9	4	15.4	13	50.0	4.00	1.23
7. Insufficient implementation procedures	2	7.7	2	7.7	4	15.4	9	34.6	9	34.6	3.81	1.23
8. Community not ready to implement the new system	6	23.1	-	-	3	11.5	4	15.4	13	50.0	3.69	1.64
9. Uncertainty regarding local community's role	5	19.2	1	3.8	4	15.4	6	23.1	10	38.5	3.58	1.53
10. Lack of local ability to exercise control	6	23.1	1	3.8	2	7.7	7	26.9	10	38.5	3.54	1.61
11. Lack of local commitment of community members	8	30.8	1	3.8	1	3.8	1	3.8	15	57.7	3.54	1.86
12. Fear of criticism for making mistakes	3	11.5	3	11.5	8	30.8	4	15.4	8	30.8	3.42	1.36
13. Policy makers do not know what is expected of them	5	19.2	2	7.7	8	30.8	5	19.2	6	23.1	3.19	1.42
14. Educational administrators unsure of their responsibilities	6	23.1	2	7.7	8	30.8	2	7.7	8	30.8	3.15	1.54
15. Lack of self-confidence of all parties	7	26.9	5	19.2	4	15.4	3	11.5	7	26.9	2.92	1.60

Number of responses for each item was 26

Discussion

Community leaders perceived more educational issues to be presenting major problems than did other stakeholder groups. They also seem to feel that the major problems of the new system could be traced to other sources rather than to them as community leaders. Issues such as insufficient allocation of resources and incentives, community not receiving adequate information and constraints through centrally determined rules could all be laid at the doorstep of the central government and other policy makers at the headquarters.

Problem issues that could be attributed to community leaders include lack of local ability to exercise control and commitment of community members. Although community leaders recognized these as moderate problems, from their perceptions these problems ranked low with respect to the others. In addition, as the standard deviations indicate, there were some disagreements among them with regard to the extent to which they perceived some of the items as problems.

The community leaders' responses to the open-ended item confirmed the notion that they attributed many of the problems to the government's inability to provide the required resources. Many of the problems cited related to two types of resources: funds and workshops. On the problem of funds one leader stated that lack of funds had led to the various committees' failure to put up their workshops. Referring to this problem, another leader noted:

> The essence of the new educational system or what will make a major step forward is the provision of workshop that will help pupils acquire skills, but this provision is lacking. It has become a major problem which must be solved with the urgency that is required.

Other concerns expressed by leaders related to there being too few qualified teachers as well as the provision of security personnel for the schools. A leader's comment was that "since education involves the learner (student) and the teacher, the teacher must be economically (financially) healthy to give out his best." On the issue of security, a leader recommended the employment of watchmen to safeguard the tools and equipment for the JSS after-school sessions.

During interviews, community leaders restated these issues in variety of ways. The assembly man (a political representative) of a locality in an interview pointed to the shortage of teachers for the practical skills as one burning issue. He recounted that the payment of a PTA levy of one thousand cedis per person imposed on everybody by the District Assembly was not forthcoming. This levy was meant to help construct workshops for the schools. According to him, if this amount was paid, the Assembly could employ artisans within the locality to teach practical skills in the schools. Some leaders also confirmed the community's unpreparedness to support the new system. One leader remarked, "the system has created problems in meeting the challenges brought about by the new system because of lack of adequate preparation."

The Chairman of a JSS Implementation Committee mentioned some issues that related to examinations and admissions. He expressed his displeasure about late release of examination results and the absence of the syllabus required by new students. He was also concerned that while schools were supposed to be community-based, many students were being admitted from outside the community thus creating the extra burden of providing transport and food for such students.

In conclusion, community leaders, like other stakeholder groups, noted that there were problems facing the smooth implementation of the educational reform program. Although they accepted that they had a role to play, they felt the government had a lot more to do. It was sign of what may be a fundamental issue for Ghanaian education that community leaders were stating this expectation at a time when the government, on the other hand, expected community leaders leaders to be more committed and indeed contribute more resources to educational matters.

Differences among Stakeholders' Perceptions

During the discussion presented earlier in this chapter, occasional reference has been made to similarities and differences among the stakeholders' perceptions of the extent to which particular items presented problems. F-tests were conducted to determine whether any statistically significant differences existed. Statistically significant differences were found in relation to only four items. These data are presented in Table 24.

For each problem listed on Table 24, the number (N) of each of the five stakeholder groups , mean of the responses (M), standard deviations (SD) and the F-value have been presented. The final column (Diff) shows the significantly different stakeholder groups. Thus, for example, on the problem of policy makers not knowing what is expected of them, perceptions of group 3 (teachers) were statistically significantly different from those of group 1 (office administrators). This means that teachers perceived the issue more of a problem than did office administrators. Similarly, the data suggest that, group 5 (community leaders) perceived the same issue as being more of a problem than did group 1.

This analysis provides a partial answer to the second sub-problem addressed in this chapter. That partial answer is that with respect to only four items were there statistically significant differences in their perceptions of the extent of problems. A more complete answer can be found in the discussion, even though not statistically significant, may be worthy of considering.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter examined the perceptions of stakeholders as to the extent of problems under Ghana's new educational system. Three main categories of problems related to: (1) resources, (2) community-readiness and (3) relationships between school-level personnel and superordinates.

Resources were the major concern for all stakeholder groups. They were perceived as major problems. The system was perceived as being characterised by poor educational infrastructure, particularly workshops and tools for practical skills. This raises the question as to whether a decentralized system with insufficient resources can achieve the potential benefits of decentralization.

Moreover, there is lack of financial decentralization under which school districts can prepare their own budgets based on their needs. It seems that there is still financial control by the Ministry of Education which results in budget-cuts for the school districts.

The second category, community-readiness was another issue.

Table 24

Differences in Stakeholder Groups' Perceptions of the Extent of Problems

Policy makers do not know what is expected of them.

Group	N	M	SD	F-Value	Diff.
1. Office Administrators	26	2.00	1.06		
2. Headmasters	44	2.75	1.33	3.02	3 > 1
3. Teachers	84	2.90	1.46		5 > 1
4. Parents	54	2.63	1.32		
5. Community Leaders	26	3.19	1.41		

Unwillingness of top administrators to divest power

Group	N	M	SD	F-Value	Diff.
1. Office Administrators	26	3.00	1.20		
2. Headmasters	45	3.27	1.42	4.31	5 > 3
3. Teachers	83	2.80	1.43		
4. Parents	54	3.37	1.42		
5. Community Leaders	26	4.00	1.23		

Constraints through centrally determined rules

Group	N	M	SD	F-Value	Diff.
1. Office Administrators	26	3.35	1.16		
2. Headmasters	45	3.71	1.18	3.34	5 > 1
3. Teachers	84	3.67	1.22		5 > 4
4. Parents	54	3.56	1.16		5 > 3
5. Community Leaders	26	4.42	.94		

Educational administrators unsure of their responsibilities

Group	N	M	SD	F-Value	Diff.
1. Office Administrators	26	2.23	1.03		
2. Headmasters	45	2.84	1.36	4.06	4 > 3
3. Teachers	84	2.35	1.22		
4. Parents	53	3.02	1.39		
5. Community Leaders	26	3.15	1.54		

While the government seems to rely on the community to make diverse contributions towards the success of the new system, it seems that most communities are either too poor or apathethic to make such contributions.

The third category (personnel relationships) was largely perceived as presenting slight problems. However, at the school level, headmasters and teachers were concerned about the "preparedness" of the students for senior secondary schools (SSS).

There was also the issue of inadequate qualified teachers, particularly for the practical skills and some languages. Moreover, it seems that even those teachers now available in the system are posted to schools without due consideration of their interests or areas of specialization.

The new system, it would appear, is beset with problems which will need to be addressed by the central government officials, policy and decision makers, as well as stakeholders in the local communities. The continued existence of such problems adversely affects the quality of education under the new policy.

CHAPTER VI

PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF THE DECENTRALIZED SCHOOL SYSTEM

In the previous chapter, stakeholders' perceptions of the extent of some problems which the decentralization in Ghana's school system sought to address were examined. This chapter focuses on some of the benefits which respondents perceived had been achieved by the decentralized system . One of the objectives for the introduction of the new system was not only to improve the quality of education in Ghana, but also to make education relevant to the country's manpower requirements. The achievement of this objective meant the attainment of certain benefits.

Sixteen potential benefits of decentralization were identified through a review of the literature. To assess the exent to which these benefits had been attained, respondents were asked to indicate on the questionnaire survey, the extent to which they perceived each issue to be a benefit in the new system. There was also an open-ended question which asked respondents to state any other benefit they had perceived in the system. Additionally, a number of respondents from each stakeholder group, were selected for interviews. These interviews offered respondents opportunities to express their views more vividly on the perceived benefits.

To assess the nature and extent of the perceived benefits in Ghana's decentralized school system was another important focus for the study. The reason is that the nature and extent of benefits attained in a system that is relatively new would help determine the extent to which the objectives of the system were being achieved. Such an awareness, it is hoped, would help in the appraisal of the system by policy makers as well as stakeholders. It would also direct subsequent efforts at maintaining the quality already attained and improving upon it. On the other hand, non-attainment or low attainment of the potential benefits would be an indication that objectives of the system were not being attained. This situation would then call for an appraisal of the procedures for getting things done in the new system.

The following sub-problems are addressed in this chapter:

1. What are the perceptions of stakeholders of the extent of the benefits derived from the decentralized system?
2. Are there any differences among stakeholder groups with respect to their perceptions of the quality of schooling as indicated by the extent of benefits derived from the new system?

The chapter opens with a presentation of the perceptions of all stakeholders as a group. The purpose of this is to convey a broad perspective on the benefit issues. After this presentation, the perceptions of the five sub-groups among the stakeholders (district office administrators, headmasters, teachers, parents and community leaders) are examined. This is done because each of these stakeholder groups perceived the benefits somewhat differently. The chapter closes with a discussion of both the manner in which the perceptions of the various stakeholders relate to each other and the general conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis.

Benefits as Perceived by Stakeholders

A summary of responses indicating stakeholders' perceptions of benefits derived from the new system has been presented in Table 25. This table, and the others presented in this chapter display frequencies (f) and percentages (%) for each of the five choices that represents for each of the relevant questionnaire items. The choices ranged from "not a benefit" (1) to "major benefit" (5). The tables also display the means (M) and the standard deviations (SD) for each item. The means are taken to be a measure of the extent of a particular benefit. Throughout the chapter, items with means of 4.0 or greater are described as "major benefits", those with means between 3.0 and 4.0 are described as "moderate benefits", and those with means lower than 3.0 are described as "slight benefits." The items on the table are ranked according to the size of the means. The standard deviations are taken to be a measure of agreement. That is, if the standard deviation is relatively low, this indicates that the group whose data were analyzed is in close agreement, whereas if the standard deviation is relatively high, the group was not in such close agreement.

Table 25 indicates that stakeholders as a group perceived all items as benefits to some extent. There were, however, two major benefits. These were: "development of skills and attitudes in special areas" (mean of 4.07) and "improved quality of programs to match students' choices" (mean of 4.01). All other items, with the exception of the last two, had frequency means above 3.5 and were therefore moderate benefits. Even the last two items: "better resources allocation including fiscal management" (mean of 3.49), and "clear role division between central support and school" (mean of 3.30) did not fall too far below the mean of 3.5. However, based on the chosen criterion they would be described as slight benefits.

Table 25 indicates that standard deviations were generally high, ranging from 1.14 to 1.29. For example, for the first two items which are considered as major benefits according to the chosen criteria, the standard deviations were 1.24 and 1.17 respectively. This suggests that opinions were divided with respect to the extent to which the issues were perceived as benefits.

It is worthy of note, however, that "development of skills and attitudes in special areas" and "improved quality of programs to match student choices" topped the ranked items. This is in line with objectives of the new system that was basically designed (1) to promote the acquisition of practical skills, and (2) to design high quality programs for all types of talents in a system, rather than the purely academic subjects which were emphasized under the old system. Moreover, since the means were generally above 3.5, the contention is that all issues were perceived as moderate benefits, lack of consensus notwithstanding.

Table 25

Extent of the Educational System's Potential Benefits
as Perceived by Stakeholders

	Not a Benefit								Major Benefit			
	1		2		3		4		5		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Development of skills and attitudes in special areas	19	8.1	14	5.9	14	5.9	71	30.1	116	49.2	4.07	1.24
2. Improved quality of programs to match students' choices	16	6.8	10	4.2	31	13.1	73	30.9	102	43.2	4.01	1.17
3. Increased students' educational achievement	16	6.8	12	5.1	32	13.6	78	33.1	94	39.8	3.96	1.17
4. Increased capacity to monitor educational service	13	5.5	18	7.6	34	14.4	79	33.5	90	38.1	3.92	1.16
5. Emergence of new program choice for students	15	6.4	19	8.1	33	14.0	70	29.7	94	39.8	3.91	1.21
6. Greater attention to staff development	16	6.8	17	7.2	37	15.7	69	29.2	94	39.8	3.89	1.21
7. More opportunities for community decision making	18	7.6	18	7.6	31	13.1	76	32.2	92	39.0	3.88	1.23
8. Increased understanding of school management	16	6.8	16	6.8	29	12.3	100	42.4	73	30.9	3.85	1.14
9. Better accountability for decisions made	16	6.8	22	9.3	32	13.6	80	33.9	85	36.0	3.83	1.21
10. Increased responsiveness to school needs by community	21	8.9	19	8.1	28	11.9	83	35.2	83	35.2	3.80	1.26
11. Nurturing/stimulation of new educational leaders	22	9.3	21	8.9	40	16.9	84	35.6	66	28.0	3.65	1.24
12. Improved mobilization of local resources	29	12.3	15	6.4	34	14.4	90	38.1	66	28.0	3.64	1.29
13. Increased responsiveness by central office staff	23	9.7	27	11.4	44	18.6	81	34.3	58	24.6	3.53	1.26
14. Flexibility of school service delivery	20	8.5	18	7.6	64	27.1	86	36.4	45	19.1	3.51	1.15
15. Better resources allocation including fiscal management	25	10.6	31	13.1	32	13.6	93	39.4	50	21.2	3.49	1.27
16. Clear role division between central support and school	30	12.7	27	11.4	60	25.4	73	30.9	42	17.8	3.30	1.26

Number of responses for the various items varied between 231 and 235

The perceptions of the various stakeholder groups (district office administrators, headmasters, teachers, parents and community leaders) are presented in the next sections of the chapter .

The perceptions of district office administrators are presented in a summary form in Table 26.

Extent of Benefits as Perceived by District Office Administrators

Similar to the perceptions of the stakeholder group, district office administrators perceived "emergence of new program choice for students" (mean of 4.36), and "development of skills and attitudes in special areas" (mean of 4.31) as major benefits in the new system. In addition, district office administrators perceived two other major benefits. These were: "improved quality of programs to match students' choices" (mean of 4.23), and "increased capacity to monitor education service" (mean of 4.04). Item 4 which related to monitoring of the system was a primary responsibility of the district office administrators, and they perceived the issue as a major benefit.

The diverse sizes of the standard deviations (between .91 and 1.33) indicate that there was a close agreement among district office administrators on the extent of benefits for some items, and much less agreement on others. For example, they largely agreed on items such as improved quality of programs to match students' choices (SD = .99), increased responsiveness to school needs by the community (SD = .95), and flexibility of school service delivery (SD = .91). On the other hand, there was less agreement items on such as "increased capacity to monitor educational service" (SD = 1.15), "more opportunities for decision making" (SD = 1.14), and "greater attention to staff development" (SD = 1.33).

Table 26

Extent of the Educational System's Potential Benefits
as Perceived by District Office Administrators

	Not a Benefit								Major Benefit			
	1		2		3		4		5		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Emergence of new program choice for students	1	3.8	1	3.8	1	3.8	7	26.9	15	57.7	4.36	1.04
2. Development of skills and attitudes in special areas	1	3.8	1	3.8	3	11.5	5	19.2	16	61.5	4.31	1.09
3. Improved quality of programs to match students' choices	1	3.8	1	3.8	1	3.8	11	42.3	12	46.2	4.23	0.99
4. Increased capacity to monitor educational service	-	-	4	15.4	4	15.4	5	19.2	13	50.0	4.04	1.15
5. Increased responsiveness to school needs by community	-	-	3	11.5	4	15.4	12	46.2	7	26.9	3.89	0.95
6. Increased students' educational achievement	1	3.8	3	11.5	4	15.4	9	34.6	9	34.6	3.85	1.16
7. Nurturing/stimulation of new educational leaders	-	-	4	15.4	6	23.1	7	26.9	9	34.6	3.81	0.95
8. Increased understanding of school management	-	-	4	15.5	4	15.4	12	46.2	6	23.1	3.77	0.99
9. More opportunities for community decision making	1	3.8	3	11.5	5	19.2	9	34.6	8	30.8	3.77	1.14
10. Greater attention to staff development	3	11.5	-	-	7	26.9	5	19.2	10	38.5	3.76	1.33
11. Better accountability for decisions made	-	-	3	11.5	8	30.8	10	38.5	5	19.2	3.65	0.94
12. Improved mobilization of local resources	1	3.8	3	11.5	7	26.9	8	30.8	7	26.9	3.65	1.13
13. Flexibility of school service delivery	-	-	4	15.4	9	34.6	10	38.5	3	11.5	3.46	0.91
14. Increased responsiveness including fiscal management	3	11.5	5	19.2	3	11.5	8	30.8	7	26.9	3.42	1.04
15. Better resources allocation by central office staff	1	3.8	6	23.1	3	11.5	12	46.2	3	11.5	3.40	1.14
16. Clear role division between central support and school	3	11.5	3	11.5	9	34.6	7	26.9	4	15.4	3.23	1.21

Number of responses for the various items varied between 25 and 26

Discussion

The responses of the district officers indicate that all items were perceived as benefits to an extent in the new system.

According to the district officers, some of the main objectives which the decentralized system was designed to achieve, such as emergence of new program choice and development of skills and attitudes in special areas were major benefits. These objectives, according to the officers who monitor the system, were being achieved.

They did not think, however, that issues pertaining to resource allocation were major benefits. These issues ranked very low in Table 26. The responses also indicate that division between the role expected to be played by central support and that expected to be played by the school was a slight benefit. Central support in this context includes the functions performed by the district office in collaboration with national as well as regional offices of education, for example, allocation of government funds, textbooks and equipment. The school, on the other hand, was expected to be a basic decision-making unit which, for example, would decide on how best to utilize the funds it receives.

In their responses to the open-ended question, district officer administrators referred to a number of other issues which they perceived as benefits. Four main issues were identified.

The first benefit mentioned by respondents was that the new system has paved the way for many children to have access to secondary education. Some comments on this benefit were: (1) More pupils will have basic and secondary education, (2) one glaring benefit is the opportunity that every Ghanaian child has of tasting secondary education, and (3) many people are exposed to secondary education.

The second benefit perceived was that the new system will provide avenues for employment because of the acquired practical skills. Among the observations made were: (1) With proper economic development, graduates from senior secondary school (SSS) can lead independent lives; they will depend on the skills acquired at school to make a living; (2) school leavers have become more employable on the labour market with a shift from the purely academic subjects to a combination of academic, vocational and technical subjects, and (3) students who cannot enter SSS will also be trained in some crafts which will make them useful to the community.

The third benefit noted was that the excessive length of time spent on pre-university education has been reduced from 17 to 12 years. On this issue some officers' remarks were: (1) there is shortening of the excessive length of basic education from 17 to 12 years (2) The number of years to complete one's education has been decreased, and (3) the new educational system has shortened the 17-year period required under the old system for the average Ghanaian student to qualify for admission to the University.

Finally it was also pointed out that both boys and girls now regard all disciplines as equally open to them. This is opposed to the former system where certain disciplines such as home economics and needlework and dressmaking were preserved for girls while technical skills were preserved for boys. Comments made included: (1) both men and women have equal opportunities, for example, boys learn housecrafts while girls study technical drawing and skills, hitherto a preserve for boys, (2) due respect is given to all aspects of educational disciplines by both parents and students, and (3) both boys and girls now do not feel shy studying subjects formerly restricted to only a particular sex, for example, carpentry, home economics and life skills.

In the interviews, the views expressed by the officers confirmed the comments made in the questionnaire responses. The District Director observed that:

> Hitherto some subjects such as vocational/technical skills and physical education have been looked down upon; now with this system, these subjects are taken seriously. The system also caters for all pupils and all talents and there are no drop-outs. Even those who don't proceed to SSS have something they can look up to.

The Public Relations Officer (PRO) also noted that:

> The new system is expected to give the products skills and knowledge which they are expected to improve upon and be self-employed and thus reduce the unemployment problem. School drop-out is expected to reduce to the minimum. Standards are expected to be higher than in the old system and basic education takes a shorter period to complete.

It seems, however, that the PRO was referring to expectations and did not indicate much what the actual situation was. The Junior Secondary School (JSS) Coordinator remarked that "the structure of the new system has been successfully put in place. There is an increase in enrollment and junior secondary schools have been established in many communities which formerly did not have." He also referred to students' achievements which, according to him, were better because, for example, students could express themselves better.

Extent of Benefits as Perceived by Headmasters

A summary of the analysis of headmasters' perceptions of the extent of benefits has been presented in Table 27. The frequency means for the ranked items indicate that headmasters perceived all issues as benefits to some extent. The criterion chosen for the study indicates that headmasters perceived three major benefits. These were "development of skills and attitudes in special areas" (item 1), (mean of 4.11), "emergence of new program choice for students" (item 2), (mean of 4.09), and "increased capacity to monitor educational service" (item 3), (mean of 4.01).

Table 27

Extent of the Educational System's Potential Benefits as Perceived by Headmasters

	Not a Benefit								Major Benefit			
	1		2		3		4		5		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Development of skills and attitudes in special areas	4	8.9	3	6.7	1	2.2	13	28.9	24	53.3	4.11	1.28
2. Emergence of new program choice for students	1	2.2	4	8.9	6	13.3	12	26.7	21	46.7	4.09	1.10
3. Increased capacity to monitor educational service	2	4.4	4	8.9	3	6.7	17	37.8	19	42.2	4.01	1.13
4. Increased understanding of school management	3	6.7	3	6.7	4	8.9	19	42.2	16	35.6	3.93	1.16
5. Greater attention to staff development	3	6.7	2	4.4	9	20.0	13	28.9	18	40.0	3.91	1.18
6. Improved quality of programs to match student choices	5	11.1	2	4.4	6	13.3	12	26.7	20	44.4	3.89	1.34
7. Better accountability for decisions made	2	4.4	4	8.9	6	13.3	18	40.0	15	33.3	3.89	1.11
8. Improved mobilization of local resources	3	6.7	1	2.2	9	20.0	17	37.8	15	33.3	3.89	1.11
9. More opportunities for community decision making	3	6.7	4	8.9	7	15.6	14	31.1	17	37.8	3.84	1.22
10. Increased students' educational achievement	5	11.1	1	2.2	5	11.1	20	44.4	14	31.1	3.82	1.23
11. Increased responsiveness to school needs by community	5	11.1	5	11.1	1	2.2	17	37.8	17	37.8	3.80	1.36
12. Increased responsiveness by central office staff	4	8.9	3	6.7	6	13.3	21	46.7	11	24.4	3.71	1.18
13. Nurturing/stimulation of new educational leaders	5	11.1	1	2.2	10	22.2	16	35.6	13	28.9	3.69	1.24
14. Better resources allocation including fiscal management	4	8.9	4	8.9	9	20.0	13	28.9	14	31.1	3.66	1.28
15. Clear role division between central support and school	1	2.2	6	13.3	12	26.7	13	28.9	12	26.7	3.66	1.10
16. Flexibility of school service delivery	3	6.7	3	6.7	13	28.9	18	40.0	8	17.8	3.56	1.08

Number of responses for the various items varied between 44 and 45

Compared to district office administrators, headmasters' perceptions were different in many respects. For example, while district office administrators considered the item, increased responsiveness to school needs by the community, high on the listing (5th position with a mean of 3.89), headmasters perceived the same item lower (11th position with a mean of 3.80) on the listing. On the other hand, while district office administrators' ranking placed the item, "greater attention to staff development" in the 10th position with a mean of 3.76, headmasters' listing placed the same item higher (5th position with a mean of 3.91). It is worthy of note, however, that all these items fell in the category that identifies them as moderate benefits. District office administrators perceived four major benefits. Headmasters, on the other hand, perceived three. Furthermore, while district office administrators perceived only two slight benefits, headmasters perceived all items as being moderate benefits with the exception of the first three items listed on Table 27. A significant observation in headmasters' responses, however, was that opinions were divided with respect to the extent to which they perceived the items as benefits. This is notable from the standard deviations which ranged between 1.10 for item 2 (emergence of new program choice for students) and 1.36 for item 11 (increased responsiveness to school needs by community).

Discussion

Most headmasters perceived every item as a benefit to some extent. One objective of the new educational reforms was the introduction of new programs related to the acquisition of practical skills by students. Headmasters' perceptions indicated that development of skills and attitudes in special areas and new program choice for students were major benefits of the new system. This is an important indicator that one objective was being achieved. In the opinion of the headmasters, greater attention was being paid to staff development. This should also be seen as an important achievement since the introduction of new subjects and new instructional skills required educators to be equipped with new instructional skills.

"Flexibility of school service delivery" placed last on the listing. This was a school service under which students could benefit from services such as guidance and counselling, mobile library service, mobile health clinics and periodic educational talks from various resource personnel. The position of the item, however, indicates that even if schools obtained some of such services, there was a need for improvement.

In their responses to the open-ended question, headmasters stated a number of perceived benefits. Four main benefits were discerned from these statements. These were: (1) accessibility of secondary education to many people, (2) acquisition of practical skills by students, (3) a reduction in the period spent on pre-university education, and (4) professional development for teachers.

On the issue of accessibility of secondary education, one headmaster remarked that "equal opportunities have been provided for pupils of both poor and the rich homes to enter senior secondary school." On the reduction in the period spent on pre-university education, a headmaster stated that "the reduction in the duration of the school course helps parents to spend less on their wards' education." On the acquisition of practical skills, another headmaster observed that "the new system ensures creative training for national development in all parts of the country because of the skills and talents that are developed."

In an interview, one headmaster praised the new system of teaching. He recounted:

> Teaching in the school is now "subject master" work. I had my own class to handle, and I was teaching all subjects irrespective of my position as an administrator. Now I am the overall head. I move round to monitor the work of other teachers. Formerly, my time was divided between teaching and administration which made both of them ineffective. Now instead of 24 periods, I handle five periods which leaves me ample time for administrative duties and at the same time handle teaching more effectively.

Another headmaster noted that, "the new system has no "drop-outs", because it is open, not too much academically oriented; practical aspects are emphasized. However, those who are not academically talented, are given every chance to move up the academic ladder."

Another headmaster in support of these views observed:

> The system is the first of its kind, and so courses were run for the heads. It has benefitted us as heads. It has put us in better position to manage our schools better than under the previous system. Every teacher has a number of subjects to cater for. The teacher knows very well that the results of his students will reflect directly on his work. So I don't have to strive too much to convince teachers on the need to work hard.

The headmaster noted that, on the average, five teachers were sharing 13 subjects, that is, about three subjects per teacher, instead of one teacher handling all the 13 subjects. These comments point to another objective of the new system. The contention is that the new system catered for people who would have been considered "drop-outs" in the old system, not because there was nothing that they could effectively learn, but because that system could not design suitable programs for them. Moreover, handling too many subjects at a time by a single teacher was found to adversely affect efficiency of teachers. Can we reasonably expect a single teacher to handle each of 13 subjects effectively? If the answer is no, then the new policy is likely to work in the interest of the country as a whole. It is also worthy of note that headmasters have ample time to perform their dual-function more effectively in the new system.

The headmasters also commended the continuous assessment system. One headmaster stated that the system was facilitating their work because "students are aware that they do not only have to pass a final examination, but should do well continuously. They are, therefore serious with their assignments." The usefulness of this system probably is that, unlike the old system where students played around with school work until the approach of an examination, students now seem to show

Table 28

Extent of the Educational System's Potential Benefits as Perceived by Teachers

	Not a Benefit								Major Benefit			
	1		2		3		4		5		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Increased students' educational achievement	8	9.5	5	6.0	10	11.9	22	26.2	36	42.9	3.90	1.31
2. Improved quality of programs to match student choices	9	10.7	4	4.8	13	15.5	20	23.8	35	41.7	3.84	1.34
3. Greater attention to staff development	7	8.3	12	14.3	13	15.5	15	17.9	36	42.9	3.74	1.37
4. Development of skills and attitudes in special areas	13	15.5	7	8.3	6	7.1	20	23.8	37	44.0	3.74	1.49
5. Increased capacity to monitor educational service	10	11.9	4	4.8	13	15.5	28	33.3	28	33.3	3.72	1.31
6. More opportunities for community decision making	14	16.7	5	6.0	9	10.7	24	28.6	32	38.1	3.66	1.46
7. Emergence of new program choice for students	11	13.1	9	10.7	9	10.7	23	27.4	30	35.7	3.63	1.42
8. Increased responsiveness to school needs by community	12	14.3	7	8.3	14	16.7	19	22.6	31	36.9	3.60	1.43
9. Increased understanding of school management	12	14.3	6	7.1	10	11.9	31	36.9	24	28.6	3.59	1.36
10. Better accountability for decisions made	12	14.3	10	11.9	10	11.9	21	25.0	31	36.9	3.58	1.45
11. Nurturing/stimulation of new educational leaders	14	16.7	9	10.7	7	8.3	19	43.5	24	28.6	3.48	1.44
12. Flexibility of school service delivery	13	15.5	7	8.3	19	22.6	26	31.0	17	20.2	3.33	1.33
13. Increased responsiveness by central office staff	13	15.5	11	13.1	15	17.9	26	31.0	18	21.4	3.30	1.37
14. Improved mobilization of local resources	23	27.4	8	9.5	7	8.3	29	34.5	17	20.2	3.11	1.54
15. Better resources allocation including fiscal management	16	19.0	17	20.2	8	9.5	29	34.5	13	15.5	3.07	1.40
16. Clear role division between central support and school	19	22.6	9	10.7	21	25.0	23	27.4	11	13.1	2.98	1.36

Number of responses for the various items varied between 81 and 84

seriousness right from the onset. They have been made aware that the work done in every single daywill count towards the final grading.

Finally, a headmaster noted that althoughthere was room for improvement in the supply of textbooks and teaching materials, the situation was better than before. It was also observed that in the decentralization era, textbooks and stationery were available in the stores. Parents who could afford therefore, had access to materials for their wards. What this means is that students could do extra work at home.

Extent of Benefits as Perceived by Teachers

Data summarising the perceptions of teacers as to the extent of perceived benefits under the new system are presented in Table 28. Teachers' responses indicate that generally they perceived most items as benefits to some extent. However, no item met the criterion as a major benefit. The first ten of the 16 ranked items met the criterion for moderate benefits while the last six met the criterion as slight benefits.

Teachers work with headmasters under the same roof, although their positions are somewhat different. However, the means for teachers' responses were generally lower than those of headmasters. The means ranged from 4.11 for "development of skills and attitudes in special areas" (item 1) to 3.56 for "flexibility of school servise delivery" (last item).

The means for teachers ranged from 3.90 "increased students' educational achievement" (item 1) to 2.98 for "clear role division between central support and school" (last item). In fact, the means for teachers were lower than those of other stakeholders as well. This seems to suggest that teachers perceived decentralization as being less beneficial than headmasters and other stakeholders.

There also seems to be some notable difference of opinion with respect to the extent of achievement of particular benefits. A case in point is where the issue of increased students' educational achievement was item 1 (mean of 3.90) for teachers, but was item 10 (mean of 3.82) for headmasters. On the other hand, while the item, "emergence of new program choice for students" was item 2 (mean of 4.09) for headmasters, it ranked as the 7th item for teachers with a mean of 3.63. It is necessary to point out, however, that even though positions of the items for the two groups seemed far apart, many of the differences were not statistically significant. In fact, only for two items, "improved mobilization of local resources" and "clear role division between central support and school," were the differences statistically significant, (see Table 31). Nevertheless, the data do seem to support the conclusion that, generally, teachers perceived decentralization to have been less beneficial than did headmasters. It should also be noted that of the seven items for which significant differences were found between any of the stakeholder groups, all involve differences between the teachers and one or several of the sakeholder groups. And the direction of the differences was consistent. Teachers perceived there to be less beneficial than the other groups.

Discussion

Teachers indicated in their responses to the open-ended question, a number of other benefits they perceived in the new system. In terms of frequencies, the issues mentioned most were (1) acquisition of practical skills by students, (2) broad knowledge of students, (3) opportunities for people to receive education, (4) subject teaching by teachers, and (5) in-service training for teachers.

On the first benefit (acquisition of practical skills), a comment made by one teacher was that "students' work in the school is now practical. They have choices to make with regard to their future careers. The students are also serious with assignments." Another teacher stated, "the new system of education will help children when they leave school; they will live with the skills they have acquired." On the same issue another teacher noted, "technological improvements are expected which, it is hoped, will pave the way for Ghana's industrial take-off by the turn of the century." Another teacher observed:

> Some communities which hitherto refused to understand the new concept have now begun to appreciate the new reforms. This is because the serious students are able to do odd jobs using their vocational or technical skills to earn some few cedis.

With regard to students obtaining broad knowledge, teachers perceived that students have not only acquired practical skills, but have also improved in their academic attainment. One teacher asserted that "students have become broad-minded as they are given general insight into many disciplines." Another teacher observed, " students have broader horizon about the subjects they learn." According to another teacher, school children are now taking technical, vocational, and technical studies." There is also "increased student talents and discovery of aptitudes," observed another teacher.

On the issue of equal opportunities, a teacher stated, "the new educational system has made provisions for more students to attend school. It has developed children's interest academically so as to make them cope with life in their society." Another teacher observed that, "graduates from the JSS have broader knowledge. Many pupils now have access to secondary education." Another teacher's comment was, "equal opportunity has been given to students from all walks of life, irrespective of their financial background."

Referring to subject teaching, teachers made a number of comments. Among them were: "Subject specialization has increased the confidence of teachers; they feel at home." Another teacher stated, "The introduction of subject teaching has helped to lessen the work load of teachers. Teachers now find themselves in areas where their interest is great and therefore can give their best ." According to another teacher, "subject teaching in schools has increased teachers' efficiency."

With regard to in-service training, a teacher noted, "I have attended in-service courses alongside other teachers. For this reason, I'm able to cope with work in the new educational reforms. I have also been equipped with some skills which are a great benefit." Another teacher remarked that "many opportunities have opened for teachers to heighten their academic status." In the view of another teacher, "teachers are being equipped with new ideas, techniques and methods through prescribed courses."

During interviews, teachers referred to a few benefits and these were similar to what had been stated on the questionnaire. Even though teachers were directly responsible for actual implementation of the new policies, they did not talk about many benefits in the interviews. However, one major benefit on which teachers seemed to agree was subject teaching which, according to them, had made their work easier. A teacher observed, "Subject teaching has made my work easier. I'm not controlling all subjects as done in the previous system. I'm now controlling only two subjects: social studies and agriculture, according to my interest." Another said, "The system is helping me -- I am teaching only four subjects as against the previous system of teaching all subjects in a class. There is job satisfaction of giving better output because teachers are now teaching subjects they are really interested in." Teachers also praised the system of continuous assessment. In a comment, a teacher stated:

> Continuous assessment helps teachers and students together. The teacher knows how the students are getting on, and through that he can help them more. Those who lag behind can be easily identified for help. Students themselves like it and helps them to work better since they don't want any bad record in their records

Teachers were also happy about practical skills to which students were being exposed in the new system. For example, a teacher noted that, "The previous system produced people with no specific skills -- "pen-pushers". With the new system, if things are successful, we hope to produce people who are exposed to specific skills which they can build on." Note that this teacher referred to one important condition in his comments: "if things are successful". This seems to suggest that things are not successful yet. This means that even though acquisition of practical skills was one of the laudable objectives of the new system, the extent to which this objective has been achieved as a benefit is still debatable.

On the whole, there is an important question to consider carefully, that is, why should teachers who are right in the classroom daily perceive that potential benefits were being realized to a smaller degree than did other stakeholders who are farther away from the classrooms?

Benefits as Perceived by Parents

Data summarizing the perceptions of parents on the extent of benefits are presented in Table 29. It is interesting to observe that parents perceived seven of the 16 items as major benefits. These were items which had means of 4.00 and above and, therefore, meet the criterion for major benefits. These items included "development of skills and attitudes in special areas" (mean of 4.19), and "more opportunities for community in decision making" (mean of 4.09). These were the first two items in the ranking. Note that while school administrators and teachers did not perceive "opportunities for community in decision making" as a major benefit, parents thought is was a major benefit.

Overall, most parents perceived all items either as major benefits or moderate benefits. For items 1 to 7, the means ranged from 4.19 (item 1) to 4.00 (item 7). These are items which met the criterion for major benefits. The rest of the items had means ranging from 3.98 (item 8) to 3.47 (item 16). These items therefore met the criterion as moderate benefits. For parents then, no item met the criterion as a slight benefit.

Another important observation on parents' responses is that, unlike headmasters and teachers who did not seem to agree in their perceptions, there was a general agreement parents' perceptions. With the exception of only three items which had standard deviations above 1.00, the standard deviations for all other items were below 1.00. For example, the first two items already noted had standard deviations of .80 and .88 each.

Discussion

Compared to district office administrators, headmasters and teachers who were more directly responsible for work in the schools, parents perceived more benefits in the new system. Parents also seemed to agree more in their perceptions than did the other three stakeholder groups.

In their responses to the open question, it was found that parents referred to only two other benefits. These benefits pertained to (1) acquisition of practical skills, and (2) reduction in the period spent on pre-university education.

On the first benefit (acquisition of practical skills), a parent noted that, "pupils have been introduced to the learning of various trades even when they are still in school." Another parent stated:

> Pupils are now exposed to some skills for their future. Pupils may be employable after leaving school. The educational system will gradually wipe away from people's minds the past misconception that certain jobs were "dirty" for literates."

Another parent pointed out:

> It is envisaged that the products of the new reform will easily fit in the society and within the economy, either as self-employed or otherwise in the industries. This will relieve the government, at least partly, of the prevailing unemployment burden.

Table 29

Extent of the Educational System's Potential Benefits as Perceived by Parents

	Not a Benefit 1		2		3		4		Major Benefit 5		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Development of skills and attitudes in special areas	1	1.9	1	1.9	4	7.4	29	53.7	19	35.2	4.19	.80
2. More opportunities for community decision making	-	-	3	5.6	9	16.7	22	40.7	20	37.0	4.09	.88
3. Greater attention to staff development	1	1.19	3	5.6	6	11.1	28	51.9	16	29.6	4.02	.90
4. Better accountability for decisions made	-	-	4	7.4	8	14.8	25	46.3	17	31.5	4.02	.88
5. Improved mobilization of local resources	1	1.9	2	3.7	8	14.8	27	50.0	15	27.8	4.00	.88
6. Improved quality of programs to match students' choices	1	1.9	3	5.6	8	14.8	25	46.3	17	31.5	4.00	.93
7. Increased students' educational achievement	2	3.7	2	3.7	9	16.7	22	40.7	19	35.2	4.00	1.01
8. Better resources allocation including fiscal management	-	-	3	5.6	7	13.0	31	57.4	12	22.2	3.98	.77
9. Increased understanding of school management	1	1.9	3	5.6	9	16.7	28	51.9	13	24.1	3.91	.90
10. Increased capacity to monitor educational service	1	1.9	4	7.4	11	20.4	22	40.7	16	29.6	3.89	.98
11. Increased responsiveness to school needs by community	1	1.9	4	7.4	7	13.0	32	59.3	10	18.5	3.85	.88
12. Emergence of new program choice for students	1	1.9	5	9.3	13	24.1	22	40.7	13	24.1	3.76	.99
13. Increased responsiveness by central office staff	1	1.9	5	9.3	15	27.8	20	37.0	12	22.2	3.70	.99
14. Nurturing/stimulation of new educational leaders	2	3.7	7	13.0	13	24.1	22	40.7	9	16.7	3.55	1.05
15. Flexibility of school service delivery	2	3.7	4	7.4	18	33.3	25	46.3	5	9.3	3.50	.91
16. Clear role division between central support and school	3	5.6	7	13.0	13	24.1	22	40.7	8	14.8	3.47	1.09

Number of responses for the various items varied between 53 and 54

One parent, however, felt that the acquisition of practical skills was based on an an assumption. He noted, "It would offer opportunity for tapping innate abilities which the former system failed to tap. This assertion assumes that resource allocation and teachers' motivation are taken care of."

Another parent's remark was:

> The educational system has so far not produced any substantial benefit since it has not matured, yet we can count on some benefits such as the introduction of students to many areas and the attempts to whip up interest in craftmanship.

One other parent asserted that:

> Students who are not academically sound will not be found loitering in our streets as before, but will gain more practical skills instead of the meagre academic attainment. They will, therefore, be of major use to the society in terms of providing handiwork and other practical things to make a living.

With regard to the second benefit mentioned by many parents (reduction in the period spent on education), it is observed that a student could spend 17 years in school before entering the university. This period has been reduced to 12 years under the new system, and parents feel great about it.

A parent noted that "the new educational system has shortened the duration of education. It has given a privilege to both poor and rich to send their wards straight to the University." Another parent remarked that "the system has reduced the years spent in school. This has enabled students to be serious. Students' behavior has improved, for they behave as secondary school students." Perhaps this parent was referring to the situation where, because of the long period in school in the old system, students sometimes grew into adulthood and so behaved as adults even when they were in school.

It is worthy of note that parents were concerned about the two issues mentioned. As parents, they are probably more concerned about their children's future and what they would do for a living. They may also be concerned about the duration because of the accompanying reduction in expenses they would incur about their children's education. Hence most of the comments they made in their responses on the questionnaire related to these two issues.

During interviews, some of the comments made by some parents indicated that they had some reservations as to the extent to which the objectives of the new system were being achieved. One parent recounted:

> The new system seeks to help the child to use his brains and hands, unlike the past when the child had to use only his brains. The previous system was purely academic. Now there is a de-emphasis on academic work. Emphasis is on both academic and practical subjects -- 50-50. That is supposed to be the objective of the new system. The syllabus has been made to suit local conditions, and that is good. It is individual and community-based, unlike the old system which was somehow foreign. Pupils are now supposed to get exposed to issues and disciplines that are relevant to the needs of the community. For example, the child is supposed to have some basic skills on which he can build for the future -- calabash works, leather works, basket weaving, dressmaking, food preparation, home keeping for both boys and girls. However, in actual implementation, the practical aspects haven't been given the needed prominence. That is, because the teachers who would handle the practical aspects are not there. Currently, the situation is as if we are back to the old system. Pupils are still learning those theoretical things.

Referring to the reduction in duration spent in school, a parent observed that "with the reduced number of years spent in school, girls leave school well before they are obsessed with problems such as teenage pregnancies. Boys equally benefit in this way."

In spite of all misgivings, parents were of the view that the new system had some inherent benefits. They seem to have the view that the total attainment of these benefits would depend on other things such as qualified teachers and educational resources.

Benefits as Perceived by Community Leaders

Data summarizing the perceptions of community leaders as to the extent of

Table 30
Extent of the Educational System's Potential Benefits as Perceived by Community Leaders

	Not a Benefit 1		2		3		4		Major Benefit 5		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Development of skills and attitudes in special areas	-	-	2	7.7	-	-	3	11.5	20	76.9	4.64	.96
2. Improved quality of programs to match students' choices	-	-	-	-	3	11.5	5	19.2	17	65.4	4.56	.71
3. Increased understanding of school management	-	-	-	-	2	7.7	10	38.5	13	50.0	4.44	.65
4. Increased students' educational achievement	-	-	1	3.8	3	11.5	5	19.2	16	61.5	4.44	.87
5. Better accountability for decisions made	2	7.7	1	3.8	-	-	5	19.2	17	65.4	4.36	1.22
6. Emergence of new program choice for students	1	3.8	-	-	3	11.5	6	23.1	15	57.7	4.36	1.00
7. More opportunities for community decision making	-	-	3	11.5	1	3.8	6	23.1	15	57.7	4.32	1.03
8. Increased capacity to monitor educational service	-	-	2	7.7	2	7.7	7	26.9	14	53.8	4.32	.95
9. Increased responsiveness to school needs by community	3	11.5	-	-	2	7.7	3	11.5	17	65.4	4.24	1.36
10. Greater attention to staff development	2	7.7	-	-	2	7.7	8	30.8	13	50.0	4.20	1.16
11. Improved mobilization of local resources	1	3.8	1	3.8	3	11.5	8	30.8	12	46.2	4.16	1.07
12. Nurturing/stimulation of new educational leaders	1	3.8	-	-	4	15.4	9	34.6	11	42.3	4.16	.99
13. Flexibility of school service delivery	2	7.7	-	-	5	19.2	7	26.9	11	42.3	4.00	1.19
14. Increased responsiveness by central office staff	2	7.7	2	7.7	5	19.2	6	23.1	10	38.5	3.80	1.29
15 Better resources allocation including fiscal management	4	15.4	1	3.8	5	19.2	8	30.8	7	26.9	3.52	1.39
16. Clear role division between central support and school	4	15.4	2	7.7	5	19.2	8	30.8	6	23.1	3.40	1.38

Number of responses for each item was 25

perceived benefits under the new system are presented in Table 30. Compared to all other stakeholder groups, community leaders perceived that there were more benefits in the new system. In fact, for community leaders, as many as 13 out of the 16 items had means of over 4.00 and therefore, met the criterion for major benefits. The means for the 13 items ranged from 4.64 for "development of skills and attitudes in special areas" (first item in the ranking) to 4.00 for "flexibility of school service delivery" (14th item). Only two items: "increased responsiveness by central office staff" (mean of 3.80) and "better resources allocation including fiscal management" (mean of 3.52) met the criterion for moderate benefits. Only the last item, "clear role division between central support and school" (mean of 3.40) was considered a slight benefit. Table 30 indicates that there was a wide range of standard deviations, that is between .65 and 1.39. This is an indication that there was a high degree of agreement in community leaders' perceptions for some of the items, while for other items, there were some differences in their perceptions.

For example, items such as "increased understanding of school management","improved quality of programs to match students' choices" and "increased students' educational achievement" had standard deviations of .65, .71, and .87 respectively. On the other hand, items such as "increased responsiveness to school needs by community", "clear role division between central support and school" and "better resources allocation including fiscal management" had standard deviations of 1.36, 1.38 and 1.39 respectively.

Discussion

Community leaders perceived more educational issues as major benefits than did other stakeholder groups. That they (community leaders) should perceive more major benefits than those who are more directly involved with education (district office administrators, headmasters and teachers) raises questions. Among the stakeholder groups, teachers should be closest to the daily operations of the school. Yet, as Table 31 indicates, more significant differences were found between teachers and community leaders than between any two groups.

As was the case with other stakeholder groups, community leaders stated a number of other benefits in their responses to the open question. One community leader stated, "It is still premature to state the full or adequate presence of problems and benefits of the new system. Periodic questionnaires of this sort are therefore of considerable benefit to create awareness." Other leaders referred to benefits pertaining to (1) accessibility of education to all students, and (2) acquisition of practical skills.

On accessibility of education, a community leader noted that:

> The new educational system has benefitted all students irrespective of their parents/guardians' financial position. It has removed religious demarcation in certain institutions. It has given chance to all talents among students.

Another leader was of the view that:

> There is participation of all pupils in basic education examination; tapping of all talents; opportunities for grammar and practical subjects; involvement of the government and the governed; the government should be commended for introducing the new educational policy.

With respect to acquisition of practical skills, one leader observed that, "the new educational system has enabled pupils who cannot do purely academic work to specialize in practical work, e.g. carpentry, blocklaying, metalwork and basketry. Another said,

> the new educational system has made it possible for pupils to use both their minds and hands for the benefit of the child and the nation as a whole; it will soon provide the needed manpower for the total development of the nation.

One other leader asserted that "students have opportunities to develop their own skills which will reduce the number of drop-outs."

Finally a community leader who commented on other benefits stated: (i) Less years are now spent on education, (ii) students are now introduced to other informal practical occupations, (iii) training of teachers has been upgraded, and (iv) awareness is being created in the community to participate in decision making and exercise influence in school management.

During interviews, community leaders expressed views which suggested that, although they seemed to welcome the new system, certain factors had placed some limitations on the achievement of maximum benefits. One leader said that the new system gave opportunities for diversification of education. There were opportunities for the child to improve upon his capabilities for meeting future challenges. Another leader observed:

> If the program goes according to prescription, and there is a provision of facilities, the contents would give ample opportunities for students. In that case, students won't be tied down to subjects for which they are not suited. They will be able to fit into their own skills and be of better benefits to themselves and their community. If this happens, it will be an improvement over the old system.

Note that this leader's comments suggest that the benefits he is referring to have not been achieved yet, and that their attainment is dependent upon the new program going according to what had been prescribed and availability of facilities.

An assembly member (a political representative) noted that "the new system is good, but certain things are lacking. If Swedru town, for example, had one big workshop, it would be good instead of individual schools trying to have their own workshops." This leader cited the local Boys' Industrial School as an example, and suggested that that school could be turned into one big workshop for the town as whole.

Finally a JSS Implementation Chairman remarked that the JSS has opened opportunities for those who formerly could not afford to go through the Common

Entrance Examination (a highly competitive nation-wide examination that was used to select students for admission to public secondary schools in the old system). He noted that:

> Hidden talents could be tapped because this is a mass, open-to-all system. Parents can now afford to meet the cost of examinations on basic education. Formerly, the costs were very high, beyond the reach of the poor, and only the elite could afford to pay for their children's education.

The new educational system, as community leaders perceive, could be beneficial to the country. However, it seems that some of the conditions on which the system will depend for success have not yet been met.

Differences among Stakeholders' Perceptions

In the previous sections of this chapter, references have been made to similarities and differences among the stakeholders' perceptions of the extent to which particular issues have been seen as benefits. F-tests were conducted to determine whether any statistically significant differences existed. Statistically significant differences were found in relation to seven items. These data are presented in Table 31.

For each benefit listed on Table 31, the number (N) of each of the five stakeholder groups , mean of the responses (M), standard deviations (SD) and the F-value have been presented. The final column (Diff) shows the significantly different stakeholder groups. Thus, for example, on the benefit of improved mobilization of local resources, perceptions of groups 2, 4 and 5 (headmasters, parents, and community leaders) were significantly different from those of group 3 (teachers). This means that headmasters, parents, and community leaders perceived the issue to be more of a benefit than did teachers. Similarly, on the benefit of "better resource allocation including fiscal management" the data suggest that, group 4 (parents) perceived the issue as being more of a benefit than did group 3.

This analysis provides a partial answer to the second sub-problem addressed in this chapter. That partial answer is that with respect to seven items, there were statistically significant differences in their perceptions of the extent of benefits. The previous discussions with respect to each stakeholder group's perceptions provide a more complete answer to the issue of the decentralized system's benefits. Differences were found among the various groups with respect to many items. Although many of these differences were not statistically significant, they may be worthy of considering.

Table 31

Differences in Stakeholder Groups' Perceptions of the Extent of Benefits

Improved mobilization of local resources

Group	N	M	SD	F-Value	Diff.
1. Office Administrators	26	3.65	1.13		
2. Headmasters	45	3.89	1.11	6.56	2 > 3
3. Teachers	84	3.11	1.54		4 > 3
4. Parents	53	4.00	.88		5 > 3
5. Community Leaders	25	4.16	1.41		

Better resource allocation including fiscal management

Group	N	M	SD	F-Value	Diff.
1. Office Administrators	25	3.40	1.12		
2. Headmasters	44	3.66	1.27	4.77	4 > 3
3. Teachers	83	3.07	1.40		
4. Parents	53	3.98	.77		
5. Community Leaders	25	3.52	1.38		

Better accountability for decisions made

Group	N	M	SD	F-Value	Diff.
1. Office Administrators	26	3.65	.94		
2. Headmasters	45	3.89	1.11	2.62	5 > 3
3. Teachers	84	3.58	1.45		
4. Parents	54	4.02	.87		
5. Community Leaders	25	4.36	1.22		

Increased understanding of school management

Group	N	M	SD	F-Value	Diff.
1. Office Administrators	26	3.77	.99		
2. Headmasters	45	3.93	1.16	2.95	5 > 3
3. Teachers	83	3.59	1.36		
4. Parents	54	3.91	.89		
5. Community Leaders	25	4.44	.66		

Emergence of new program choices for students

Group	N	M	SD	F-Value	Diff.
1. Office Administrators	25	4.36	1.04		
2. Headmasters	44	4.09	1.10	3.39	1 > 3
3. Teachers	82	3.63	1.42		5 > 3
4. Parents	54	3.75	.99		
5. Community Leaders	25	4.36	1.00		

Clear role division between central support and school

Group	N	M	SD	F-Value	Diff.
1. Office Administrators	26	3.23	1.21		
2. Headmasters	44	3.66	1.10	2.65	2 > 3
3. Teachers	83	2.98	1.36		
4. Parents	53	3.47	1.08		
5. Community Leaders	25	3.40	1.38		

Development of appropriate skills and attitudes in areas of specialization

Group	N	M	SD	F-Value	Diff.
1. Office Administrators	26	4.31	1.09		
2. Headmasters	45	4.11	1.28	3.34	5 > 3
3. Teachers	83	3.73	1.49		
4. Parents	54	4.19	.80		
5. Community Leaders	25	4.64	.86		

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter examined the perceptions of stakeholders as to the extent of benefits under Ghana's decentralized educational system. All of the items investigated were perceived as benefits to some extent.

Items pertaining to students' achievement, such as "development of skills and attitudes in specialized areas", emergence of new program choice for students" and "improved quality of programs to match students' choices" were generally perceived as major benefits.

Items pertaining to various roles expected of stakeholders, such as "increased responsiveness to school needs by the community", "increased understanding of school management", and "better accountability for decisions made" were largely perceived as moderate benefits. With regard to relationships among stakeholder groups, only one item, "clear role division between central support and school" was perceived by all stakeholders as being a slight benefit.

Stakeholders' perceptions indicated that there were other benefits as well. They noted that the new system has paved the way for many children to have access to secondary education, because many secondary schools (both junior and senior) have been opened in communities that formerly did not have. Students have also been exposed to a combination of academic, vocational and technical skills. This will provide avenues for employment. Moreover, all disciplines are now equally open to both boys and girls. It was also perceived that the excessive length of pre-university education has been reduced from 17 to 12 years. This reduction, in effect, has reduced expenditure which parents incur on their children's education.

Subject teaching is perceived as a benefit by headmasters and teachers. This is because each of them now handles between two and four subjects within their areas of specialization and interests. This seems to increase headmasters' efficiency both as administrators and teachers. Teachers have fewer subjects and are therefore, likely to handle them more efficiently.

Continuous assessment is also a benefit to both teachers and students, because grading of students now depends on what is done throughout a term, and not only during end-of-term or end-of-year examinations.

It is worthy of note, however, that stakeholders seem to perceive that, a maximum attainment of these benefits would be realized when issues such as the supply of adequate resouces and qualified teachers, particularly for the practical skills, are effectively addressed.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In addition to a summary, this chapter includes a discussion of conclusions and inferences related to the overall purpose of the study and to the specific research questions. Suggestions for further research are also provided.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The overall purpose of this study was to examine three fundamental administrative issues in Ghana's newly decentralized educational system at the elementary level. These three issues relate to: (1) the extent of involvement of key stakeholders (district office administrators, headmasters, teachers, parents, and community leaders) in educational decision making, (2) stakeholders' perceptions of the extent of problems in the new system, and (3) stakeholders' perceptions of the extent of benefits derived from the new system.

As the discussions in Chapters IV, V, and VI illustrate, stakeholders were not comfortable with their extent of involvement in school decision making and indicated a preference for increased involvement. Moreover, they perceived that the new system was beset with potential problems. At the same time, however, they perceived that the system had achieved some benefits.

It needs to be borne in mind that the findings related to stakeholders' involvement, and the extent of potential problems and benefits are based on data collected at a particular time. A caution raised by Maynes (1990, p. 274) in relation to his study needs to be considered here. It is entirely possible that circumstances in Agona Swedru District of Ghana might change in ways which will alter the forces associated with the factors in the District and, indeed, the country as a whole. For example, the new system was in its fourth year of operation during the study. And as indicated in an observation made by a community leader (Chapter VI), it might still be "premature to state the full or adequate presence of problems and benefits of the new system. Periodic questionnaires of this sort are therefore of considerable benefit to create awareness." This comment suggests that there was probably the need for more awareness in the community. This is one example of a factor that may be changing and in doing so alter the perceived balance between problems and benefits, for awareness could mean more commitment on the part of the community.

Addressing the Specific Research Questions

This study sought to investigate some specific questions related to the newly decentralized system. These questions related to stakeholders' perceptions of the extent of: (1) their actual involvement as compared to their preferred involvement in school decision making, (2) potential problems, and (3) potential benefits under the decentralized educational system.

The study also sought to determine differences, if any, between stakeholders' perceptions of the extent of: (1) their actual and preferred involvement in school decision making, (2) potential problems, and (3) potential benefits under the decentralized educational system.

Stakeholders' Overall Involvement in School Decision Making

School-based management is a process in which trust plays an essential role -- the Superintendent and the Board trust the school principal to involve his or her faculty, students, parents and community in decision making processes at the school (Johnson, 1991, p. 4). And central administrators must trust that this involvement will lead to high quality decisions. This suggests that there should be an appropriate level of involvement of all stakeholder groups.

The material presented in chapter IV demonstrates that there were discrepancies between stakeholder's actual and preferred involvement in school decision making. Stakeholders indicated that although they were actually involved in school decision making they would prefer increased involvement. This preference for increased involvement was greater with respect to decisions related to school resources such as audio-visual aids, library books, equipment for science, sports, music, etc., and provision and renovation of school building. With respect to issues pertaining to educational processes, such as appointment of teachers, student discipline, quality of teaching staff, in-service training and design of courses, stakeholders indicated that their actual involvement was higher, yet even on these issues they would prefer a greater involvement than they had.

Grassroots participation was touted as the central objective of the decentralization in Ghana. The PNDC District Secretary (DS), who is currently the political head of the district, noted that decentralization as operating in Ghana, meant "demystifying power to the door of the ordinary man." He observed that until District Secretaries were appointed as district heads in 1983, there had been over-centralization in Accra, the national headquarters. District heads were figureheads who had no direct control over their departments. Under the new system, he noted that twenty-two departments had been decentralized. See Appendix G.

According to the District Planning Officer (DPO), decentralization meant "giving power to the local or district departments and personnel to make policies at the district level." The DPO explained that decentralization in Ghana was aimed at (1) bringing power to the people -- the grassroots at the district level and (2) improving the lot of the people at the local level by allowing them to make their own laws, policies and decisions and see to their implementation. The DPO noted that decisions made at the local level worked better because the local people knew their own financial standing and educational level better. Towards the end of making better educational decisions at the district level, the Ghana Education Service (GES) had been decentralized among the twenty-two departments.

The District Budget Officer (DBO) also stated that decentralization was meant (1) to enable the representatives of the people in the District Assembly to make and implement certain decisions affecting the people and (2) to enable the people to see themselves as part of the government and to be initiators of policies rather than waiting upon the central government. The District Assembly, according to the DBO, was "supposed to be the focal point in the decentralization policy." The DBO added, however, that to a certain degree little has been done after the establishment of the District Assemblies because of the absence of real financial decentralization policy. He observed:

> Because of the absence of financial decentralization, members of staff of the District still owe their allegiance to their parent organization at the regional and at the central government. In effect there is practically no change in the relationships among the District Assembly, District Administration, Regional Administration and the Central Government.

According to the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the GES, the community members were being encouraged to be actively involved in school matters. The views expressed by some political authorities explained why there were still discrepancies between the extent of stakeholders' actual and preferred involvement in school decision-making. According to the PRO, the District Education Office had no direct link with the Ministry of Education but still received instructions through the GES headquarters in Accra. The District Coordinator of the Junior Secondary School program confirmed these views when he stated that " in the new system there is no major change; the Ministry has a monitoring team known as National Planning and Implementation Committee on School Reforms which visits schools to ensure the success of the new system."

The PRO further observed, "the district office supervises the learning and teaching programs in accordance with the laid down policies of the Ministry of Education. In effect it does not formulate policies but sees to the effective implementation of policies." The Coordinator of JSS also stated that certain issues such as those related to curriculum and examinations are still left with the Ghana Education Service.

There are, however, some issues which the district administrators could decide on. The Director pointed out that these decisions, which in effect are special responsibilities, must not be in conflict with official policies. These include special levying of fees or the removal of heads who were not pulling their weight. The levies are special fees charged apart from those authorized by the Ministry. As an example, the Director said the Office initiated a special levy of one thousand cedis (C1000.00) per a student in 1990. This levy was meant for the provision and renovation of school buildings and workshops.

The PRO added that the district office could also decide on matters such as admission of students, appointment and transfer of teachers, and approval and opening of new schools. According to the JSS Coordinator, the office could also decide on choice of courses, time table, reopening dates and closing times of the schools and the preparation of expanded schemes of work. In effecting some of these decisions, the office must, however, seek approval from the District Assembly before it becomes law.

Involvement of Various Stakeholder Groups in School Decision Making

Stakeholders wanted more involvement in decision making related to resource items than decisions related to pedagogical issues. Findings with respect to each stakeholder group indicated similar trends. Each stakeholder group indicated relatively little involvement and preferred considerable involvement in decision-making with respect to all items, particularly, school resources.

A Quadrant Analysis Model (QAM) used in the analysis, however, identified for each group those items for which the gap might be most substantial. The use of the QAM was described in Chapter IV.

District Office Administrators: As officers who monitor elementary education in the district, District office administrators, there were two items for which the gap were substantial. These were textbooks and stationery and allocation of funds. Thus although there was a preference for greater involvement for all items, officers would seem to have more concerns over these two areas.

Headmasters: Headmasters' greatest concerns related more to resource items: provision of furniture, provision/renovation of schools, equipment for science, etc., school supplies, and library books. They were also more concerned with their salaries as well as those of teachers.

Teachers: Teachers' perceptions were similar to those of headmasters. With the exception of provision/renovation of school, teachers' concerns related to all items over which headmasters had greatest concerns.

Parents: Parents differed somewhat from the officers who were more directly involved with school operations, in their perceptions. Their greatest concerns related to resource items: textbooks/stationery, provision/renovation of schools and allocation of funds. Apart from these resource-related items, parents also indicated greater concern for student discipline and appointment of teachers.

Community Leaders: Like parents, community leaders greatest concerns related to resources. These were audio-visual aids, provision/renovation of furniture, equipment for science, etc., allocation of funds, provision of furniture, as well as textbooks/stationery. The only non-resource item over which leaders expressed concern was in-service training.

Stakeholders' Overall Perceptions of Problems

Most of the issues identified under the previous centralized systems as problems, were perceived as problems under the decentralized system as well. Findings with respect to stakeholders' perceptions of problems were presented in Chapter V. Lack of incentives and resources were noted as the biggest problems. Other issues pertaining to the community's role also posed as substantial problems. These include dissemination of information to the community, for example, with regard to its new role as well as its commitment and readiness to accept new ideas. Constraints through centrally determined rules was also seen as a moderate problem.

Stakeholders seemed to have confidence; policy makers and administrators were aware of the roles they were expected to play, and that if anything, these were minor problems.

District office administrators mentioned incentives such as means of transport and accommodation for education personnel as potential problems. One issue posing as a disincentive was that teachers were threatened with dismissal and this made them work in fear. There was also lack of cooperation between the community and the school. Students who started the new system were weak to start with and that was another disincentive for classroom teachers.

One major problem related to resources was finance. It was noted that there were not enough financial resources to provide buildings and workshops, and that the community could not be relied upon to provide those resources. Fees expected to be paid by parents towards school supplies and examinations were considered too high and therefore many parents could not afford to pay. School administrators said that textbooks and stationery for supply to schools often arrived in the district rather late.

The PNDC District Secretary, also mentioned lack of resources and noted that the major problem related to finance. He pointed out that financial resources from the government were not enough to carry out development projects in the district. These projects included the provision of school buildings. The District Budget Officer referred to the District Assembly's leading role in the provision of amenities. He noted that the Assembly's total involvement left much to be desired, a situation that was "much attributed to the fact that the District Assemblies for the past three years have done little to improve the living conditions of the people." The District Director of Education stated:

> In the new system, it is the responsibility of the communities to provide structures like school buildings, furniture, workshops, etc., but some of the communities are not strong enough financially to provide these structures and so we have schools that have very poor buildings.

The Public Relations Officer said that matters which school heads feel most strongly about were incentives. According to him, "Most school heads feel that they have been overloaded with work. Some of them teach in addition to their administrative duties. Conditions of service -- remuneration is considered too poor, and is a disincentive to hard work." He added that in urban areas most heads complain of large classes and there are no maintenance grants or imprest for routine and incidental expenses.

The JSS Coordinator also noted that accommodation for teachers was a major problem because of the increase in the number of teachers under the new system. He referred to infrastructure such as school buildings and renovation as poor.

Problems as Perceived by Various Stakeholder Groups

District Office Administrators, Headmasters and Teachers: Generally, those more directly involved with school operations (District office administrators, headmasters, and teachers) agreed in their perceptions of potential problems. Their perceptions seemed to have been influenced by or related to their positions. They noted that there were inadequate educational resources, particularly workshops, textbooks and school supplies, a situation which posed as serious disincentives.

These officers also perceived "lack of commitment of the community" as another potential problem. They also noted that economic constraints of the people affected the provision of workshops, furniture, and payment of fees. Textbooks and school supplies often arrived in the district late for distribution to the schools. There was also the problem of an inadequate number of qualified teachers, especially for the technical and vocational skills.

There was also a lack of real financial decentralization which would allow the district authorities some parameters to expend money according to their priorities.

Teachers' salaries were perceived as poor. Educational personnel did not have suitable accommodation and means of transport. The means of transport was felt to be a problem, particularly by district office administrators who, as school supervisors, were expected to be mobile. Teachers were also posted without consideration of their interests and areas of specialization.

Parents: Parents perceived inadequate resources and incentives as potential problems. The supply of resources such as school grants and textbooks was seen more as the responsibility of the central government. In addition, parents noted that there were not enough qualified teachers, that teachers currently found in the classrooms were not giving their best, and that they were not devoted to their profession as teachers.

Community Leaders: Leaders perceived more potential problems than other stakeholder groups. Similar to other stakeholders, leaders perceived that resources and incentives were problems. In addition, lack of adequate information, constraints through centrally determined rules were potential problems. Lack of local ability to exercise control and commitment of the community as a whole were other problems. Lack of commitment, for example, led to many members not paying school levies.

Stakeholders' Overall Perceptions of Benefits

Stakeholders perceived all items presented in the study as benefits to varying degrees. Two items were perceived as major benefits: development of skills and attitudes in specialized areas and improved quality of programs to match students' choices. Other items were perceived as moderate benefits. Such items included increased students' educational achievement, increased capacity to monitor educational service and emergence of new program choices for students. Better allocation of resources including fiscal management and clear role division between central support and school were perceived as minor benefits.

Benefits as Perceived by Various Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder groups differed somewhat in their perceptions of potential benefits. Their perceptions seemed to have been influenced by or related to positions they occupied within the organizational structure as well as processes within the organization.

District Office Administrators, Headmasters and Teachers: One primary responsibility of District office administrators' related to "designing of new programs for students." They perceived this item as a major benefit. However, teachers who implement these program decisions perceived the issue only as a moderate benefit.

District office administrators and headmasters (educational administrators), noted that the new system had paved the way for many children to have access to secondary education. The new system would also provide avenues for employment because of the acquisition of practical skills. The excessive length of pre-university education had been reduced from 17 to 12 years. Both boys and girls showed equal interests in all disciplines. They also noted that drop-outs in the system were expected to reduce to the minimum.

Headmasters noted additional benefits. Subject teaching was a potential benefit because it offered headmasters time for administrative duties and teaching. Teachers noted that the system made them more competent. Continuous assessment was also a benefit because it helped both teachers and students to follow academic progress throughout a session. Therefore, headmasters and teachers perceived the new system as being more than just decentralization. This is because, as noted above, new processes which facilitate their work have been introduced.

In addition, teachers seemed to praise the new system of in-service training. According to them, periodic courses and seminars they attended equipped them with new skills and ideas which enabled them to cope with work in the classroom. They were also teaching subjects which fell in line with their field of specialization and interests.

Parents: Parents seemed to be more happy with the acquisition of practical skills and with the reduction in the period spent by their children in education. These were benefits which seemed to give their children a secured future and a reduction in expenses made on education.

Community Leaders: Community leaders appeared to perceive more benefits than other stakeholders in the questionnaire survey. However, during interviews, they referred only to two issues: acquisition of skills, and accessibility of education to all. They seemed to feel that (1) it was still premature to assess the system fully, and (2) there was still a need to create an awareness of the new system throughout the community.

Differences in Stakeholders' Perceptions

The study sought to determine the extent, if any, of differences in stakeholders' perceptions of the extent of actual and preferred involvement in school decision making. It also sought to determine the differences in stakeholders' perceptions of problems as well as benefits in the new educational system. These sub-problems were addressed at the end of Chapters IV, V and VI.

Quadrant model analyses indicated different levels of actual and preferred involvement for stakeholder groups. These have been discussed in Chapter IV. Also in Chapter IV, the f-tests carried out indicated that, with the exception of only four items in respect of headmasters' involvement, all differences in stakeholders' level of actual and preferred involvement were significant. See Table 10. With respect to problems, the f-tests indicated significant differences for only four items, particularly between community leaders on one hand, and other stakeholder groups on the other. These have been noted in Chapter V (Table 24).

With respect to benefits, as indicated in Chapter VI, statistically significant differences were found with only seven items (see Table 31). There were more differences between teachers and community leaders than between any other two stakeholder groups.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Authors who write about decentralization of school decision-making identify involvement of appropriate people at the local level as the primary objective of decentralization. In Ghana this needs to be weighed with the notion that the central government could no longer shoulder the burden of education. The people at the local level were, therefore, required to contribute towards education.

The people who provided the data for this study were those known to be directly involved with education at the elementary level. These were people identified as the stakeholders in the study. Decentralization was to have resulted in their having a level of control in decision making that would make them feel committed and accountable to decisions made. However, this study indicates that stakeholders were generally not comfortable with the level of control they exercised. They wanted a level of involvement greater than that which had been granted to them. This preference suggests an awareness that the days that government was expected to do everything might be over. Indeed, power for decision-making cannot be retained at the top if the central authorities expect the people at the local level to be responsible for education. Sackney (1986, p. 15) suggested:

> Bottom-up, school specific efforts require a participatory or democratic approach that involves a high degree of staff collaboration, group planning, and shared decision making. Principals may enhance school effectiveness by increasing the participation of teachers, parents and other stakeholders.

While stakeholders wanted more involvement in all school decisions, they particularly wanted more involvement with decisions on educational resources. For example, there was evidence that teachers were relatively comfortable with the newly introduced subject teaching. Subject teaching also allowed headmasters adequate time for administrative work as well as teaching.

Ewanyshyn (1986, p. 188) pointed out that "as a public enterprise, education is too important to be dominated by the control of one educational level." Although he was referring to education elsewhere, this assertion holds true for Ghana as well. People occupying positions at different organizational levels should be responsible and accountable for certain types of decisions. However, in practice it was not clear which decisions were taken at which levels in Ghana. It was indicated that decisions on only a few issues such as curriculum and examinations were still centralized. Yet it was not clear what decision-making powers were given to educational authorities at the district level. At the time of the study, the Ministry of Education in Accra (the national headquarters) was the policy maker. The Ghana Education Service, headed by the Director General (DG) at the headquarters, was the policy implementing national body. The DG was assisted by a Regional Director at the Regional Office. The Regional Director was assisted at the district level by an Assistant Director (AD). It was, however, noted that the District had no direct links with the Ministry of Education. Also at the time of the study, a new policy had just been introduced under which the district was also to be headed by a Director. In fact, in Swedru Education District, the AD was in the process of handing over the district office to the newly appointed District Director (DD) at the time of the study. The District Assembly's role was to approve certain school decisions which the DD wanted to make and implement. The situation then, was that while the DD owed allegiance to his regional and national superiors, he at the same time, looked up to the Assembly for approval of certain decisions. Could this not lead to a duplication of efforts? It is a situation that calls for a clarification of responsibilities. This raises the question: What is the highest decision making body at the district level in the new system? What major issues can they decide on apart from issues such as levying of local fees and dismissing officers who were not pulling their weight?

In some decentralized systems, educational policies identified which decisions were to be made at the centre and which ones were left at the district level. The reason, as Weiler (1990, p. 439) pointed out, arose out of the need to adapt educational efforts to local conditions, both in terms of local economic activities, and in terms of knowledge and understanding of the local region. At the same time there was the need to recognize the demands of modern labour markets and communication systems that require more generalized and uniform competencies, skills, and certifications at the national and, indeed international level. For these national priorities, Leithwood and Begley (1986) noted that in Canada, for example, some decisions, including curriculum and testing, have been centralized in most provinces within a policy of school-based planning and participative decision making. Also in

Papua New Guinea, Bray (1984) observed that decisions pertaining to teacher training, teachers' conditions of service, most aspects of the curriculum, inspectors and large parts of finance are controlled from the centre. The implications of these for Ghana is that policy makers are called upon to carefully assess Ghana's situation and adapt the policy of centralization-decentralization according to the country's set educational objectives.

School-based management was identified in the literature as a policy that seemed to be working well for schools in some decentralized systems. Under this policy, it was noted that School Committees comprising the principal and representatives of teachers, parents, community, and students where appropriate, were the basic decision making unit. The seems to imply that stakeholders were involved, and possibly to the level they preferred. In Ghana's case, however, these committees were not in place officially. This may, in part, explain why stakeholders were not comfortable with the extent to which they wished to be involved. The only bodies that seemed to be officially recognized were Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA's). It was not clear as to what power PTA's had to make and implement decisions at the school level. This is another area that requires a review.

Another important decision making area related to finance. There was no financial decentralization. There was evidence that lack of educational resources was closely related to inadequate funds. While local communities expected the government to provide adequate funds for education, the government expected the communities to provide the bulk of funds for educational resources. It is reasonable to expect that real financial decentralization probably would have made the district more responsible in making and implementing its own financial decisions. The 1985 Sub-Committee on Decentralization of Public Administrative System in Ghana defined financial decentralization as:

1. Allocation of funds to sub-national levels to use according to their priorities;

2. Giving the sub-national levels appropriate powers to raise their own finances and use them in accordance with their priorities.

Such a policy would probably make the district more committed and accountable. As it was, financial decisions were still largely made at the headquarters. Under this situation, stakeholders perceived that adequate allocation of funds was the responsibility of the central government. Financial decentralization could mean that when the district makes its own decisions, it would probably feel more committed to find the funds to supplement what had been obtained from the government. And that would imply more involvement on the part of stakeholders.

With respect to problems, stakeholders expressed concern about inadequate infrastructure that militate against the success of the new reforms. Acquisition of practical skills was a primary objective of the new system. The achievement of this objective means the provision of an adequate resource base, particularly the provision and renovation of schools, workshops and tools. Strain (1990) contended that resources are the means whereby the management function is carried out, and the means whereby we get things done. Findings indicated that resources were really lacking. Opinion, however, seemed to be divided as to whether the responsibility of providing these resources belonged to the central government or the community. This is another issue that requires to be addressed. On the part of the community, however, the issue did not seem to be unwillingness, but probably due more to economic constraints. Conyers (1982) cautioned that the objectives which decentralization is intended to achieve cannot be achieved by decentralization alone. This warning suggests that in Ghana, other factors could be solutions to educational problems such as the procurement of educational resources, rather than pure decentralization of school decision making power. The living conditions of the people and their readiness as well as commitment to the new system are other factors that need to be seriously addressed.

Among the stakeholder groups, teachers perceived more problems and fewer benefits. All stakeholders perceived lack of incentives largely due to inadequate resources as a major problem. It is reasonable to conclude that the effect of this problem would be felt most by those closest to the school, beginning from teachers, through headmasters to district office administrators. Indeed, in their responses, teachers were the group that referred constantly to this problem. Therefore the effect of teacher satisfaction on the success of the new system is an area that needs to be seriously reviewed.

With respect to benefits, it was noted that the JSS had been firmly established. It had completely replaced the former Middle School system that led to no specific skills. Stakeholders noted that students had acquired some practical skills. There was a new program choice for students. It was also observed that the JSS students could express themselves better in language use than the Middle School scholars. It was also noteworthy that various disciplines were now open to both boys and girls. The prevalence of problems, however, seemed to limit the full attainment of these benefits. There were insufficient number of qualified teachers for the practical skills, and tools with which to teach were either lacking or were inadequate. This seemed to place a limitation on the extent to which the objectives could be achieved. This assertion is supported by some responses such as "if things are successful," "the situation is as if we are back to the old system," and "it will soon provide the needed manpower." This situation also calls for an assessment of employment opportunities that have been opened by the new system.

It should also be borne in mind that the period spent in pre-university education has been reduced from 17 to 12 years. At the same time, there is the expectation that educational attainment will be higher than under the previous system. Stakeholders saw this reduction as a positive policy. This reduction in the period for schooling and higher attainment in education, however, means that more work has to be done by all groups. It should be noted also that the system did not start with a new breed of students, but simply took over from where the old system left off. There was evidence that this situation was causing a problem in teaching. Teachers complained that they did not know where to start. The situation therefore calls for a number of positive steps to take. This should include paying due attention to a number of issues including:

- defining what decisions should be made at what levels;
- the provision of adequate educational resources;
- paying attention to the primary school level as the foundation stage;
- organizing frequent refresher courses to upgrade headmasters and teachers' skills;
- reviewing teachers' conditions of service;
- providing extra school services such as guidance and counselling, mobile health clinics, and mobile libraries.

Issues Related to Ecological Validity

Decentralization of educational decision-making in developing countries has been a modern trend. As an administrative practice it has been adopted from developed countries including Canada and Australia. Educational decentralization in developed countries has yielded significant benefits to their people. It has been assumed then, that since the policy has produced results for Canada, for example, it would be equally beneficial for a developing country such as Ghana.

It has been noted already (Chapter III) that in some locations in Canada, the policy of decentralization has developed to a stage where the individual school is the basic decision-making unit--a policy known as *school-based management*. Thus schools within a district are allotted money to purchase supplies, equipment, personnel, utilities, maintenance, and other services according to their own assessment of what is appropriate. This has worked very well in the Canadian context (Caldwell, Smilanich & Spinks, 1988, and Brown, 1990).

On the other hand when decentralization as a policy was introduced in Nigeria, a developing country, in 1976, a different set of circumstances was obtained. Igwe (1986) pointed out that in most parts of Nigeria, the decentralization scheme soon ran into major problems. An instance was where communities were deprived of essential supplies, and some areas had to impose levies on the citizens to fill the gap. Igwe noted that eventually the annual grant per pupil was withdrawn in Nigeria in January 1982.

These two examples suggest that issues related to ecological validity as emphasized may have important implications for the potential of decentralization to improve education in Ghana. Baine (1987) has argued that a policy that is working successfully for a people in one environment may not be ecologically valid for a people living in another environment. With respect to the adoption of a curriculum from one environment to another, Baine (1987, p. 23) suggested that:

> An alternative procedure for selecting the tasks to include in a curriculum is to (a) perform an ecological inventory to identify the essential, functional tasks children are required to perform at higher levels, and (b) task analyze these tasks to determine what subskills are required.

A lesson that is to be learned from these observations is that educational decentralization as a policy may not be a readily exportable commodity. Developing countries would be well advised to perform an ecological inventory to identify the essential practices that will be workable in their contexts. Ansu-Kyeremeh (1987, p. 51) has pointed out some basic tenets underlying the adoption of a relevant education to a people. He noted that:

> Education must relate to the environment and the needs of the clientele; that rigidly structured learning process are incapable of creating a congenial learning atmosphere within the community typology being dealt with; and that the active participation of the community in the design and implementation of an education scheme for the benefit of its members is of paramount importance.

It is not certain to what extent decentralization as a foreign policy was adapted to make it workable in Ghana. The findings of the study in Ghana have revealed a number of pitfalls. These, as has been noted, include discrepancies between the extent of the people's actual and preferred involvement in educational decision-making and inadequate educational resources.

The assumption that decentralization can achieve successes in Ghana simply because it has been successful elsewhere is therefore tenuous. For this reason it is important to bear in mind that most of the objectives which decentralization is intended to achieve such as the improvement in the management of rural development, may not be able to be achieved by decentralization alone (Conyers, 1982). It may well be appropriate to devolve educational decision-making power from the national to the sub-national levels in Ghana and other developing countries, but before making such a decision, policy makers should examine critically political and socio-economic factors. Where appropriate, they should consider adopting the policy to reflect the results of this analysis.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

In this study it has become evident that a number of structures have been put in place to effect the decentralization policy in Ghana. District Secretaries have been appointed as political heads representing the central government in the districts. District Assemblies have been set up. District Directors of Education have been appointed to monitor the new educational system in the districts. JSS Implementation Committees have been set up to oversee the progress of the schools. In spite of these structures, the decentralized system, as perceived now, requires a critical review in several of its areas of operation including the educational sector. In education some areas that need to be addressed have been highlighted in the discussions above. More areas still require in-depth studies. In this section, suggestions with respect to five of the areas requiring policy makers' attention are offered.

The first area to study is the issue of education finance. The District Budget Officer pointed out clearly that there was no financial decentralization. This seems to suggest that there was not a clear role division between the government and the community on the question of educational finance. Responses to both the questionnaire and interview survey, suggest that the communities were not economically able to provide the needed support to education. For this reason they appeared to rely on the central government for educational finance. At the same time is was clear that funds from the government were inadequate, indicating that the community should supplement. It also appeared as if the community was not fully aware of its expected role in financing education. This situation might not only be because of poverty, but also might be due to lack of commitment. A question that arises, therefore, is: What is the role of (1) the government, and (2) the community in financing education under the decentralized system? What is required is a clear understanding of the roles played by these two institutions. If the community were aware of its actual expected role, probably it would feel more committed in finding the money to play its role. Then some of the resources that are now lacking would probably be there. This situation therefore calls for an in-depth study involving key stakeholders and policy makers. Such a study might contribute towards the knowledge of the people's ability and commitment to pay towards education, bearing in mind their socio-economic background. Since the study will involve top policy makers within government circles, the extent to which the government itself is able to allocate sufficient funds to education might be determined. On the basis of such knowledge, a sound financial policy for education might then be formulated.

The next area that might call for study is the effect of the Junior Secondary School (JSS) on employment. Some stakeholders pointed to the acquisition of practical skills and emergence of new program choices as avenues that had offered job opportunities to JSS leavers. Others seemed to feel that the real impact of the new skills on employment was yet to be felt. This raises a question: What is the impact of the JSS program on job opportunities? This calls for a quantitative type of study supported by some interviews. The new system promised to offer much with regard to employment of its products. People do not feel committed to the system probably because they are not aware of the extent to which it could lead to job openings. If they become aware of this benefit, they might feel more prepared to invest their resources in education. If, on the other hand, the results of such a study indicated a negative trend, it might serve as an eye-opener to policy makers. They would then be required to address those factors that place limitations on the achievement of the employment objective.

Closely related to the issue of job opening is accessibility of JSS leavers to the senior secondary school (SSS). Most stakeholders, particularly among parents, were happy with the notion that the SSS was open to all students irrespective of their socio-economic background. They were particularly happy that the former national Common Entrance Examination had been abolished. It should be borne in mind that under the new system, entrance to SSS was not automatic. It depended on a student's performance at the JSS final examination, that is, Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). It was not clear what percentage of JSS leavers gained an SSS entrance. The number of students going to the senior secondary is another important indicator of the effectiveness of the JSS program. From some of the comments made, there seemed to be a suspicion that only a certain calibre of students gained entrance. If the new system has really paved the way for all students, then one can ask: To what extent is SSS admission open to all students? Does it include students from poor homes and from the remote villages?

Another area of research is related to the level of teacher satisfaction. Teachers are closest to the classroom. They are expected to play a major role in implementing educational decisions under the new system. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that their satisfaction will go a long way to help the system to achieve its objectives. To find the impact of teachers' satisfaction on students' achievement will be another useful area for research. Addressing teachers' satisfaction will include issues such as posting teachers to schools of their choice as much as possible; teaching fewer subjects within their interests and areas of specialization; having adequate school supplies; having active support of PTA's and churches where applicable; attending periodic refresher courses; and above all ensuring adequate remuneration for their work. Students' achievement will include successes at internal and external examinations, gaining entrance to post-secondary institutions; and securing right jobs after schooling.

Finally, it was evident that policy makers' attention was mainly directed at the JSS, a mid-point in students' academic career. Headmasters and teachers complained that the initial JSS students had a weak foundation. By that they were referring to the primary schools. It seemed that not enough attention was paid to the six-year primary school program which would feed the junior secondary schools. Note that according to policy, promotion from primary to the JSS is "whole-sale," that is, every pupil must be promoted irrespective of his/her performance. Teachers, especially those who handle JSS 1, may not feel comfortable whenever a new batch of students show up from the primary school. As some teachers noted, they did know where to start with such students. Therefore there is the need for policy makers to look into that area critically. What do Primary 6 pupils require to fit into JSS 1? How does the primary school syllabus merge into that of the JSS? How adequate are the primary schools supplied with resources? What calibre of teachers are put in the primary schools?

Addressing the needs of primary schools should therefore be seen as an important pre-requisite to the success of the educational reforms.

A Final Comment

The PNDC government and the present day policy makers deserve commendation. Available records show that in the last few decades, various committees and commissions were set up by past governments to review the structure of the national administration as well as the structure and content of education. These include the Education Review Committe of 1967, the Mills-Odoi Commission of 1968, the Education Review Committe of 1973, and the Oko Commission of 1974. Their reports indicate recommendations for decentralization including education. These recommendations, however, were not known to have been fully implemented. It is therefore a courageous decision which this government took to introduce the decentralization policy, a policy which, as Eghan and Odum (1989, p. 13) noted, has been "characterized by changes in the political, economic, social, and public administration structures to the advantage of the vast majority of Ghanaians."

At the time of this study twenty-two sectors had been decentralized. This includes the education sector, a section of which was the focus of this study. It is expected that since the policy of involving the grassroots has finally taken off, all the necessary measures will be taken to actually involve the people, that the power for decision making will be fully transferred to the people. The study has indicated that the people are not comfortable with their level of involvement and have indicated a preference for increased involvement. A number of educational benefits were noted. At the same time a number of potential problems seem to place a limitation to the full attainment of the objectives for which the system was decentralized. These problems require attention, and urgently.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Questionnaire Covering Letter

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

7 - 104 Ed. Building North
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6G 2G5

April 22, 1991

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently enrolled in a Master of Education program in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada.

In partial fulfillment of the program, I am conducting a research study entitled: “Perceived Problems and Benefits of a Decentralized Elementary Educational System in Ghana." The central questions of the study include:

1. To what extent are members of the local community involved in educational decision making under the new educational system introduced in September 1987?
2. What are the perceived problems of a decentralized administration of basic education in Ghana?
3. What are the perceived benefits that would accrue from such decentralization?

The enclosed questionnaire has been developed to gather data related to these questions. As a member of the local community involved in the education of the youth, your input will be of vital importance. Your voluntary cooperation will therefore be greatly appreciated. The time required to complete the questionnaire is approximately twenty-five minutes. Please note that the research information will be treated as confidential and you need not write your name on the questionnaire. The data collected will not be used for any other purpose apart from the stated objective.

Please feel free to contact my research supervisor, Dr. William G. Maynes at the above address or me at Telephone O41-494 or The Ghana Education Service, District Office at Agona Swedru to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours in Education

Joseph Osapah Mankoe
(M. Ed. Candidate)

cc: Dr. William G. Maynes

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE ON EDUCATIONAL DECENTRALIZATION

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please reply to **all** questions.
2. Please read carefully the instructions for each section.
3. The questionnaire consists of three sections. The time required to complete all sections is approximately 25 minutes.

YOUR CO-OPERATION IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

PART A - Demographic Information

Please check (√) the appropriate answer.

1. What is your position? (1) District office administrator____
(2) Headmaster/headmistress/headteacher____
(3) Teacher____
(4) Parent____ (5) Community leader____

2. What is your gender?
(1) Female____ (2) Male____

3. Where do you live?
(1) Town____ (2) Village____

PART B

Following the establishment of District Assemblies and the implementation of the new educational system in Ghana in September 1987, the local community has been expected to participate in decision making at the level of basic education. This has been done through, for example, the formation of Junior Secondary School (JSS) Implementation Committees at the district, town and village levels. **For each school issue you are asked to report your opinion on the extent to which you are actually able to influence decisions and the extent of influence you would prefer to have granted to your school.**

		A Great Deal (1)	A Fair Amount (2)	Very Little (3)	Almost None (4)	Don't Know (5)
1. Allocation of School Funds	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. Design of Courses	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. Classroom Instruction	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

		A Great Deal (1)	A Fair Amount (2)	Very Little (3)	Almost None (4)	Don't Know (5)
4. Appointment of Principals	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5. Appointment of Teachers	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6. Principal/Teacher Salaries	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. Quality of Teaching Staff	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8. Staff discipline	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
9. In-service training	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
10. Library Books	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
11. Textbooks/Stationery	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
12. Examinations/Testing	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
13. Student Promotion	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFRRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
14. Size of Classes	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
15. Admission of students	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
16. Student discipline	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
17. Provision/renovation of school building	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
18. Provision of furniture	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
19. Extra-curricular activities	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

		A Great Deal (1)	A Fair Amount (2)	Very Little (3)	Almost None (4)	Don't Know (5)
20. School supplies (chalk, pens,	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
cardboards, etc.	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
21. Equipment for Science,	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
sports, music, etc.	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
22. Audio-visual aids: radio, TV,	ACTUAL	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
tape recorders, etc.	PREFERRED	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

PART C

With regard to potential problems that could result from the new educational system, please circle a number in each of the following items to indicate the extent to which you regard each item as a problem.

1. Insufficient resources are allocated to schools.
   Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
2. Insufficient local resources to tap for the benefit of the schools.
   Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
3. Insufficient implementation procedures.
   Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
4. Policy makers do not know what is expected of them.
   Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
5. Unwillingness of top educational administrators to divest power.
   Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
6. Constraints through centrally determined rules and regulations.
   Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
7. Uncertainty regarding the extent of the local community's role.
   Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
8. People at various levels of educational administration are unsure of their responsibilities.
   Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
9. Lack of self-confidence on the part of all parties involved in decision making.
   Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem

10. Lack of local ability and expertise to exercise proper control.
    Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
11. Lack of commitment on the part of the community members.
    Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
12. Inadequate positive incentives for people expected to play a leading role.
    Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
13. Fear of criticism for making mistakes.
    Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
14. The local community did not receive adequate education on the new system.
    Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem
15. The community was not ready to fully implement the new system.
    Not a problem 1 2 3 4 5 Major problem

Please indicate any other problem/s you have perceived under the new educational system.

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PART D

With regard to perceived benefits under the new educational system, please circle a number in each of the following items to indicate the extent to which you perceive an item as a benefit to be derived.

1. Improved mobilization of local resources.
   Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
2. Better reallocation of resources including fiscal management.
   Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
3. More opportunities for the community participate in educational decision making.
   Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
4. Better accountability for decisions made.
   Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
5. Increased understanding of school management.
   Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
6. Nurturing and stimulation of new leaders at all levels of education.
   Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
7. Increased responsiveness to school needs by the community.
   Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
8. Increased responsiveness by central office staff.
   Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
9. Emergence of new program choices for students.
   Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
10. Improved quality of school program to match individual student choices.
    Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
11. Greater attention to staff development.
    Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
12. Clear division of roles between central support and schools.
    Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
13. Flexibility of school service delivery.
    Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
14. Increased capacity for monitoring the quality and quantity of educational service.
    Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit
15. Increased student educational achievement
    Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit

16. Development of appropriate skills and attitudes in areas of specialization.
Not a benefit 1 2 3 4 5 Major benefit

Please indicate any other benefit/s you have perceived under new educational system

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APPENDIX C

Interview Guide: District Office Administrators

INTERVIEW GUIDE: DISTRICT OFFICE EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

1. Since September 1987, we have had a new educational system which focused on the Junior Secondary School (JSS) system which also led to the formation of the JSS Implementation Committees at the district, town and village levels. What do you think of the new system as compared to the system that was in operation before 1987?
2. What kind of relationship exists between the district office and the Ministry of Education?
3. What specific role/s does the district office play with regard to educational issues such as policy-making, decision-making, budget, curriculum, examinations, etc?
4. Do you have any interaction with parents and community members who get involved with the day-to-day operations of the school? If so, in what ways?
5. What structures exist in the district to ensure that school principals operate under the district policy guidelines, i.e. to ensure accountability?
6. What communication channels exist for the district, to interact with the heads of the schools i.e. to obtain feedback?
7. Are there any educational issues that have been exclusively left for the office to decide on? If so, what are they?
8. Why do you think such issues should be left for the office to decide on?
9. What school matters do the school heads feel most strongly about?
10. To what extent are you satisfied with work of the school heads under the new system?
11. What problems do you perceive as having been the result of the new educational system?
12. What benefits do you perceive as having been derived from the new educational system?

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide: Headmasters/Headmistresses and Teachers

INTERVIEW GUIDE: HEADMASTERS/HEADMISTRESSES & TEACHERS

1. Since September 1987 we have had a new educational system which focused on the Junior Secondary School (JSS) system which also led to the formation of the JSS Implementation Committees at the district, town and vilage levels. In what ways has this changed your work at the school? What do you think about the new system as compared to the system that was in operation before 1987?
2. How are parents and other members of the community involved in educational decision making?
3. What categories of people in the community normally participate in decision making?
4. To what extent do members of the community show a desire to participate in decision making?
5. What educational issues do you feel should be left to be decided on exclusively by educational administrators?
6. Why do you think such issues should be left for administrators to decide on?
7. What issues do the community feel most strongly about?
8. What communication channels exist for administrators and community members to make joint decisions?
9. To what extent are you satisfied with the current role of the community in school operation? How about your own role?
10. Given the current state of affairs in education in the district, do you expect that in the future, the community will be involved to a greater or lesser extent?
11. What problems do you perceive as having been the result of the new system?
12. What benefits do you perceive as having been derived from the new system?

APPENDIX E

Interview Guide: Parents and Community Leaders

INTERVIEW GUIDE: PARENTS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

1. Since September 1987, we have had a new educational system which focused on the Junior Secondary School (JSS) which also led to the formation of the JSS Implementation Committees at the district, town and village levels. What do you think about the new system as compared with the system that was in operation before 1987?
2 Tell me about any opportunities you have had to participate in decision making at the school?
3. How did your views influence the final decision?
4. Generally in what ways are you involved in the operations of the school?
5. Through what mediums do you express your concerns to educational administrators? How are these concerns addressed?
6. In what areas of school operations do you wish to have influence?
7. What areas, if any, do you feel should be left entirely to school staff to decide on? What are your reasons?
8. How satisfied are you with the current opportunities that you have to influence education in the district?
9. What problems do you perceive as having resulted from the new educational system?
10. What benefits do you perceive as having been derived from the new educational system?

APPENDIX F

Interview Guide: P.N.D.C. District Sectretary, Presiding Member of the District Assembly, District Budget Officer and District Planning Officer

DECENTRALIZATION IN GHANA

Interviews the PNDC District Secretary, Presiding Member of the District Assembly, District Budget Officer and the District Planning Officer

The District Assemblies, such as the Agona District Assembly, have been set up (1987) as a major step towards the implementation of the PNDC government's decentralization policy in Ghana.

1. What is your understanding of such decentralization?
   b. What is it designed to achieve?
2. To what extent has the entire government machinery been decentralized?
3. What is the role of the District Assembly in the decentralization policy?
4. What relationships exist now among the Distict Assembly, the District Administration, Regional Administration and the Central Government?
5. How do members of the local community understand the new policy?
6. What roles are they expected to play?
7. To what extent do they perform those roles?
8. How does the decentralization policy affect basic education (Primary and Junior Secondary Schools) in the District, for example, with regards to educational decision making, financing, supply of resources, etc.?
9. What do you say about the JSS Implementation Committees at the district, town and village levels?
10. How is the district ensuring the success of the new educational system?
11. How has the district benefitted from the decentralization policy?
12. What have you seen as the major problems militating against the successful implementation of the policy in the Agona District?
13. What workable/realistic solutions do you have to offer to those problems?

APPENDIX G

Decentralized Departments in Ghana

DECENTRALIZED DEPARTMENTS IN GHANA

1. Ghana Education Service
2. Ghana Library Board
3. Information Services Department
4. Department of Social Welfare
5. Department of Community Development
6. Department of Town and Country Planning
7. Ghana Highway Authority
8. Public Works Department
9. Department of Parks and Gardens
10. Department of Rural Housing and Cottage Industries
11. Statistical Services
12. Births and Deaths Registry
13. Controller of Accountant General's Department
14. Department of Forestry
15. Office of the District Medical Officer of Health
16. Deparment of Feeder Roads
17. Fire Service Department
18. Department of Animal Health and Production
19. Department of Fisheries
20. Department of Agricultural Extension Services
21. Department of Crop Services
22. Department of Agricultural Engineering

Source: P.N.D.C. Law 207: Local Government Law, 1988, p. 52.